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NOTES OF THE WEEK

SIR HAMAR GREENWOOD'S expectations of a pacified Ireland are not justified at present. Perhaps, however, they were deliberately optimistic, as a lead towards peace. Last week a K.C. who was an Irish judge was shot; murders and ambushes continue; and the police are busy with plotters both in Ireland and this country. A more stringent examination of ports and vessels is part of the Government plans against the rebels. The delay in the publication of the Strickland Report is causing comment. As usual, the Government lack courage, and try to put off things as long as possible.

As there is talk of Ministerial changes, a few remarks on our present rulers may not be amiss. The unintelligent Mr. Illingworth, a legacy from Mr. Asquith, should be made a Peer, a Colonial Governor, a Lunacy Commissioner, or anything you please to get rid of him. The House of Commons won't put up with him much longer. His dull voice, his wooden replies to questions, his inability to grasp a point were tolerated so long as nothing important was entrusted to him. But his handling of the telephone position has revealed how spurious is his inherited reputation for possessing even average West Riding shrewdness. He is certainly the stupidest minister on the Treasury Bench, and his place can be filled by twenty better men, beginning with Mr. Pike Pease, Sir F. Banbury, or Mr. Jackson.

What is the guilty secret that binds Dr. Addison to Mr. Lloyd George? Why cannot the Prime Minister get rid of this incompetent hanger-on? Dr. Addison, an academic doctor, a failure at the Ministry of Munitions, helpless at a meeting unless surrounded with sixteen private secretaries who prompt him with a crowd of figures, is not only a public danger, but a public nuisance. His fatuous Housing and Health Schemes have failed, and all we have obtained is the

general increase in municipal rates, which have reached such a point that 20s. in the £ is now a common experience.

There is some talk of Lord Derby coming back into active politics. So much the better. A clever man he is not. But hard-working, shrewd, public-spirited, and without a grain of vanity, he commands great respect. Uprightness of character, rough, rugged common sense and a fine record of public service of great variety have won for him a name to conjure with in Liverpool and Manchester, and every town in Lancashire. He will not be able to fill the place of Mr. Bonar Law, but it will be a very high place. A peppery temper is his worst fault, though he is always cheerful and the storm soon blows over.

Once again France looks to M. Aristide Briand to handle the Ship of State in dangerous waters. For the fourth time the active, eloquent Breton is Prime Minister, and it is well that a tried and capable man is available at such a time as this in France and Europe. A Socialist and a man of strong views, he possesses tact and wisdom in no small measure. Coming from the province of church domination, he was able to separate church from State with a minimum of friction and disturbance. Courageously and with a firm hand he broke the railway strike in 1910, and earned the gratitude of France by destroying a conspiracy which aimed at the paralysis of her industries. In 1915 and 1916, the most difficult months in the history of his country, he was in office and acquitted himself well. Once again he is confronted with grave problems at home and abroad. He will get support in his work, we do not doubt, but he will need it all.

The dissolution of the Confédération Générale du Travail by order of the French Courts is notable in many ways. The judgment confirms the general view that leaders of labour are forcing the members of their unions into paths wherein they have no desire to walk, and, furthermore, that a small but noisy

MOTOR—WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION ACT,—FIRE, ETC.



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minority are using their position to gain results outside the sphere of their legitimate operations. Both in France and England the working class is being fooled by unscrupulous men, who are working to achieve their own personal ambition rather than the general welfare. It is becoming daily more evident that we must adopt an attitude towards so-called "Labour" which is in conformity with the strong line taken by the French authorities. It is the duty of a government to protect the people against the tyranny of a small minority who would ruthlessly exploit their fellows to the detriment of the country.

Monstrously high wages blackmailed out of the public by the coal-miners have driven away foreign buyers of coal, who refuse to pay even 77s. per ton as compared with 115s. a few weeks ago. America has captured our export coal trade, and the British trade, as a whole, is being worked at a loss. Unless the Government subsidizes the miners' wages, or the miners accept lower wages, the price of coal to home consumers must be increased. Telephone users cannot go elsewhere for a cheaper telephone service and are helpless. But the foreigner goes to America and gets coal more cheaply than from us. British steel makers will not pay the present price for coal; it is too dear to enable them to compete with imported steel. To pile the loss on to the buyer of domestic coal in order to find preposterous wages for the miners will enrage every householder. The public won't stand the Government paying a subsidy. Miners will have to take less wages, whether they like it or not. The fault lies with themselves; they smashed the export trade by driving our foreign customers into the hands of our competitors.

The telephone operators have squeezed out of the Government four and a-quarter millions for war bonuses for the year 1920-1. Result, four millions sterling loss on the year's working. In order to prevent this loss falling on the general body of taxpayers the Government proposes to raise the telephone charges. Who are the wasters, the Government or the rapacious and inefficient telephonists? Stop the war bonuses, and this particular waste will stop. War bonuses of four and a quarter millions are the cause of the telephone ramp. Civil servants and miners are determined not to bear their fair share of the cost of the war.

Ilford has been plunged in darkness by a strike of municipal workers, with no electric light, no tramcars, nearly all the shops closed, and a great run on candles. Even cleaners and caretakers have refused to work. We observe that the Ilford Council have unanimously resolved to break the strike, but are being persuaded away from their resolution by official interference. Every time the strikers win, the party which admittedly cannot govern, gets a little nearer governing the country, and openly defying the recommendations of the Cabinet. The building trade unions have held up the plan to employ ex-service men on house building, though everyone knows that the union arrangements are quite indefensible in their waste of time and idle discrimination of various sorts of labour.

Labour now stands aloof from Government proposals, and has refused to co-operate in a committee which will consider the whole question of unemployment. And Labours' spokesmen talk of "the right to work or maintenance." That is to say, all the thrifty people in this country are to support all the idlers, who do not choose to work, and support the public-house instead of their families. This is waste that no country can afford, a proposal ridiculous on the face of it. It may sound pleasing to sentimental humanitarians, but it is not supported by the New Testament. St. Paul told the Thessalonians that, "if any would not work, neither should he eat." He was confronted with men who would not work, and were "disorderly busy-bodies." The same class are walking the streets of London today, and prejudicing the cause of real distress.

Mr. Thomas's plea that workers should have a share in the management of the railways has little to commend it. Using the term "worker" as applied to one whose service is manual, we may ask what reason there is that such a class should say how this or that is to be effected? Had they the genius for that, they would not now be manual workers. There is no class distinction in railway management, or in any management, for that part. The executive is selected for ability and nothing else. The directors of a railway are so very largely in name. It is the general manager and the departmental managers who run the railways and if a manual worker shows executive ability, his chiefs will be only too glad of his services, and pay well for them. That is the only way to obtain efficiency. Mr. Thomas would doubtless like a seat on the board of any railway company, both for himself and his friends, but ability in one sphere carries no guarantee of ability in another. His proposal might provide yet another opening for the ready speaker, rather than an opportunity for the technical administrator, or business organiser in a sphere where skill or commercial ability is of paramount importance. A long tongue is seldom found in a long head.

It is a pity that Labour leaders cannot take a broad view, for their efforts appear to be concentrated on immediate profit rather than ultimate benefit. A striking instance of this is their deliberate hampering of the smaller industrial undertakings, thus discouraging the enterprise of competent manufacturers who trust to their own efforts and skill rather than to finance. They are aware of the large number of practical men who have sold out during the last few years, leaving their businesses in the hands of companies, trusts, and combines. Evidently the trade unions find these latter easy to deal with, but they will discover before long that they will bring nothing but disappointment. Besides the fact that they are preventing the skilful operator from ever establishing himself in any industrial adventure, they are encouraging the conduct of businesses, wherein they are so greatly interested, by men without experience and skill. They may prefer to deal with such rather than meet those who can argue with knowledge born of experience; but thereby they are reducing the nation's industrial capabilities and directly promoting unemployment. They should meet the new employer who has created employment and made it practicable and profitable, and they should help him by ensuring skilful labour and withholding their irritating restrictions.

Elsewhere we publish a recommendation of State assistance for civil aviation to which we append a note intimating our disagreement. In the *Times* Major-General Brancker has been deploring the lack of financial support in this direction, pointing out the successful rivalry of the Dutch manufacturer, Fokker. Without discussing the future of commercial aviation we suggest that it would be much more pertinent to the present position if Major-General Brancker explained the circumstances of the Aircraft Manufacturing Company to the share and noteholders in that unfortunate concern, with which he was so closely connected. To ask the Government to support an undertaking with such a record is preposterous. If Major-General Brancker's plea is put forward on behalf of the unhappy shareholders, their interests might have been studied at a much earlier date. Those who invested money in the business so recently, want to know where the money has gone. Surely it has not all gone into the air?

The appeal of the convicts, Field and Gray, against the sentence of death passed on them at the Lewes Assizes only accentuates the worthlessness of their careers, and shows hard-working taxpayers a type of youth they are forced to support in idleness. It is a sordid story. From the unsavoury details we learn that Gray, a married man, was unable to read or write. His amusements, like those of his younger fellow convict, appear to have been "pubs" and pictures, and his more seri-

ous-occupations, robbery and the waylaying of young women in order to relieve them of their petty cash or trinkets. What a reflection on that costly education which is supplied or offered for nothing, and the demoralising picture-shows, which the poorest find time and money to patronise! When will our legislators learn wisdom?

"Doing as one likes" is, as Arnold pointed out in 'Culture and Anarchy,' the Englishman's privilege, but it can be overdone. There comes a time when rowdiness and inflammatory language cease to be trifles, and when it may be unadvisable for "our educated and intelligent classes" to "remain in their majestic repose." For ourselves, we do not care two pence what Ex-Colonel Malone, M.P., says or does. But he is, perhaps, dangerous to people whose normal state is one of nervous excitement; and so it is as well that he should have a chance of meditating on the results of wild rhetoric. His sentence of a few weeks back has been confirmed on appeal. He might in his six months of leisure compose an addition to the Little Grey Books, 'How to Remember all your Visitors.' Is he not Mr. Pelman's prize pupil?

The "Riviera Notes" which are appearing in certain newspapers irritate with their reek of snobbery. Possibly they are a form of advertisement designed to puff the wares of the hotels and shops of the Riviera. Bragging about visitors' titles, yachts, motor cars, jewels, clothes and amusements may attract other titled nobodies and crowds of social pushers, all with money to fling away. Quiet folks, seeking the sun and health, are filled with disgust, and avoid places where the paid press-agent crams names and the climbers' vulgarities down everybody's throat. The stunt-papers scream that the nation must economize; yet the Riviera is now filled with English pleasure-seekers bent on having what they call "a good time." Unless driven abroad to escape the dangers of an English winter, these people ought to set the example of private thrift, or, at least, of keeping money in this country, if it must be spent on pleasure.

As it is, they are advertised by the complacent pressman. For example, Wednesday's *Times* gives prominence in its Monte Carlo Notes to the fact that Col. Sir Mathew Wilson, M.P. ("Tatters") played golf, and that Lord Beaverbrook ("Max") even walked down to La Turbie; and that among "the recent members" at Mont Agel are Mr. Mallaby-Deeley, M.P., and Mr. Kennedy Jones, M.P. ("K.J."). Our readers can judge for themselves to whom such names as these act as an attraction. What stuff to print!

The Prince of Wales has headed a fund to which we are asked to subscribe in order that the Boy Scout movement may be developed. There have been few better institutions conceived in recent years than that of the Boy Scouts, and Sir Robert Baden Powell and his collaborators deserve praise and thanks both for the conception and its ample fulfilment. Yet it is because of the national and international value of the Boy Scout movement that we question the wisdom of public subsidy. In its earlier days it was independent of help, and in our view it is highly desirable that it should remain self-supporting, for the essence of its teaching is self-reliance and independence. To make the youngsters feel that the organisation is their own, and depends on their individual effort is, we consider, a great point.

We know well how little store the young place on that which is given to them without effort on their part, and we remember the enthusiasm with which Boy Scouts strove to equip themselves and pay from their pocket-money for the coveted odds and ends of uniform and outfit. One might argue that some might never attain either, by reason of their poverty. This is not so. Picture-palace profits and the financial success of boys' papers argue the contrary. Thrift is the most desirable teaching for the young to-day, and they would prize that which thrift obtains for them. We have seen

too many excellent ideas destroyed by charity to approve of the Boy Scouts looking to the public for help. Seldom do good morals and easy-got money go hand in hand.

There is increasing agitation for the production of chemical and optical glass in this country. While we should like to see this manufacture successful and self-supporting, we must point out the folly of bolstering it up on false premises. It is proposed that every article manufactured in Great Britain should be so labelled. It is hard to discover how this would help, for in many instances our products are inferior to those imported. We have just had an opportunity of examining a Zeiss lens, recently sent to England for special work. In the accessory parts the workmanship is not up to pre-war standard, but the lens itself is equal to it in every way. And in spite of the exchange, it is dearer than either an English or American lens. The Jena price lists are 14 times pre-war figures, and it is significant that the Zeiss works have already booked two years' output for America alone. We must remember that we have to compete in the world's markets for the work done by these lenses. If we prohibit or unduly restrict their importation, many large industries must suffer.

Applications for seats at Wimbledon in the summer to view the lawn tennis were closed by the first post on Wednesday last. This sounds rather absurd; but there are already nearly 10,000 requests for 500 seats. At Twickenham on Saturday the largest crowd hitherto known gathered to see the Rugby international match between England and Wales. This rage for sport is often condemned. But it should not be forgotten that the exercise of games has immensely improved the English figure and prolonged the period of vigorous manhood. A bulky presence like that of the traditional John Bull is nothing like so common as it was. The man of forty can retain much of the ardour of youth, as he lacks the weight of Mr. Tupman.

In our ideas of sport rather than militarism we resemble the Athenians rather than the Spartans; and other nations after deriding our football and athletics have taken them up. Twenty-five years since it was possible to see a sort of a game of football played by German boys in summer with all their clothes on. Germans stared at mad Englishmen in strange coats called "blazers" equipped for lawn-tennis. Across the North Sea before the war they had good players of their own, and the Wimbledon meeting gathers competitors from Serbia and Japan. Now France takes part in the Rugby internationals, only needing more experience of the game to be equal to the best of the British Isles; and this week a seat has been reserved in the French Cabinet for a Minister of Sport. The Government means to support the creation of athletic grounds.

Lovers of music will miss the voice of Mr. Gervase Elwes, a singer of real taste as well as excellent style. He did not cherish the sentimental twaddle which is put forth by the music publishers. One of his songs was "The night has a thousand eyes," a lyric which has found its way into numerous anthologies. We regret to notice that the writer of it is also dead, Mr. Francis Bourdillon. A charming and accomplished man, he was a good mediæval scholar, and edited and translated 'Aucassin and Nicolette.' His verse was good, but did not reach the height of his famous lyric.

Lethargy is now a common failing among the workers of this country; and we gather that it has reached the status of a regular disease, lethargic encephalitis, which is recognised as different from sleeping sickness, the origin of which was discovered in Africa. Hitherto the doctors have only been able to note symptoms; and all their tests have failed to discover any germ. It is a curious thing that, so soon as a disease is diagnosed and so effectually dealt with as to become rare, a new one seems to take its place.

NATIONAL SELFISHNESS IN TRADE.

AN embarrassing fact of this troublous hour is the tendency of all countries to protect home industries at the expense of foreign trade. The universal fraternity foreshadowed by the famous League is just now a shadowy and tenuous thing.

"Ourselves Alone" appears to be the slogan of all the peoples, great and small, even that of the Foreign Minister of Latvia who has been fostering trade—from the Carlton Hotel, if you please. France herself intends to follow the example of her neighbour south of the Pyrenees by penalizing foreign banks operating within the Republic.

Italy's new restrictions are well-known; so are those of Central Europe and the rarer and fragmentary States. Canada, Australia, and the United States now frown upon the immigrants whom once they aided and welcomed to their shores. In California, indeed, politico-social exclusiveness goes so far as to contemplate the snuffing out altogether of foreign landowners, and the complete "Americanization" of Californian oil resources. Such a step would be a serious blow to the interests of at least five nations, and especially to the great holdings of the Royal Dutch-Shell group.

So it is not of fraternity or internationalism that Parliaments talk to-day, but of key-industries, anti-dumping, and drastic remedies for collapsed exchanges. Depression continues to lower like a wintry fog. Scandinavian owners are withdrawing nearly 400,000 tons of shipping from the Tyne alone; and we find the president of the Birmingham Chamber of Commerce predicting "the greatest crisis the world has ever seen," since "the whole world seems to have stopped buying at once." Luckily events have a way of confounding these prophets of woe.

At the same time we fancy the protection of home industries can be carried too far. Just now Canada fears a revision of America's tariffs, and there are prospects of still higher duties against Canadian products. For this reason the Canadian press urges the speedy appointment of an Ambassador of their own at Washington, or, at any rate, a commercial representative.

This opens up a lively prospect for the British envoy of ten years hence. He—poor harassed man!—may be a sort of central sun in the big brick palace of Connecticut Avenue, surrounded by shooting—or at least sniping—stars from all our great Dominions, each one of them intent upon the interests of his own people.

We doubt whether this new exclusiveness is anywhere more recklessly planned than in Spain, of which nation our own manufacturers and those of the United States had lately the highest hopes. For Spain was very rich—until her magnates and banks began to gamble in the depleted moneys and exchanges of Europe. Then we saw panic in rich Cataluna, and the great Bank of Barcelona stopped payment amid exciting scenes.

"Spain for the Spaniards" is the watchword of Don Eduardo Dato's Government, which pays no heed to the outstanding historic fact that in all ages that country has relied upon foreign capital and genius for her development.

A great British firm like Messrs. Huntley and Palmer built up a fine trade in Spain, even with the duty on biscuits at three pesetas a kilo. What will they do now, since from December 1st a Royal Order has fixed the duty at nine pesetas?

This new Spanish tariff on imports shows increases that vary from 50 to 200 per cent. Perfumes leap from 120 pesetas a kilo to 300; silks from 13 to 39, leather goods from 4 to 12, optical instruments from 10 to 30. Any sort of an umbrella—good or bad—now imported into the forlorn Peninsula pays nine pesetas in duty, or 7s. 6d. at the normal rate of exchange.

The result of this new Royal Order has been disastrous. Agents and importers in Spain have summarily cancelled hundreds of thousands of pounds' worth of orders and our manufacturers have no remedy at all. Traders have besought the aid of the Ambassador, but what can Sir Esmé Howard do when *le Roi l'a dit*?

The British Chambers of Commerce in Madrid and

Barcelona, and the big Federation under Colonel Thornton have both been agitated by members and others seeking advice. "Our own industries must be protected," maintains the Minister of Hacienda in Madrid.

Unluckily in Spain such protection spells inevitable inanition and decay. It is all deplorable. International trade means more than money. It involves mutual understanding and esteem, whereas we have now only estrangement and irritation.

It is therefore to be hoped that the causes of this widespread movement are but temporary, and that these economic barriers will soon be swept away in a tide of international commerce which will bring moral and material profit to us all.

AVIATION SUBSIDY AT LAST.

(By W.L.M.)

IT is only a little less than four years ago that the British Government first showed an interest in the post-War development of civil aviation by appointing a committee, known as the "Civil Aerial Transport Committee," which, under the chairmanship of Lord Northcliffe, was to advise them on the prospects of commercial flying in peace. This Committee was unanimously of the opinion that, for some years at any rate after the inauguration of peace, civil aviation would not be a commercially paying proposition, and recommended to the Government in their report, which was presented towards the end of 1918, that some form of State assistance would be necessary. Peace then came, and shortly afterwards the ban upon civilian flying was raised, the Department of the Controller-General of Civil Aviation instituted, and various regulations for the greater safety of commercial aviation issued; but there were no signs of the advice of the Civil Aerial Transport Committee being taken, although there was much official talk of the necessity for a thriving industry in the interests of the nation. Time went on and two ardent firms of enthusiastic pioneers started tentative service between London and Paris in the face of almost certain loss; and still the Government held out no hope of assistance. Early last year they appointed another committee with the title of "Advisory Committee on Civil Aviation," with Lord Weir this time in the chair. This new Committee after further exhaustive enquiries again urged the necessity of State aid and went further in recommending a direct subsidy of 25 per cent. of the gross takings of any company carrying passengers, mails, or goods on certain approved routes, such as London to Paris and London to Brussels, within a maximum total limit of £250,000 during the financial years 1920-21 and 1921-22. This report was presented to the Government in April, 1920, and was followed by complete silence. The Air members of the House of Commons repeatedly tried to elicit from Ministers an expression of opinion as to the views of the Government on the recommendations of Lord Weir's Committee, but the Cabinet refused to be drawn and things continued to go from bad to worse in the aircraft industry. The Government then decided to hold an Air Conference, and everyone connected with the air gathered together last October and read papers on the position of affairs and future lines of development; their deliberations concluding in a resolution urging upon the Government the vital necessity of giving effect to the recommendations made in April by Lord Weir's Committee. This further resolution in no way disturbed the sphinx-like attitude of the Government, who continued to present an unbroken silence to all enquiries. At the end of the year the Controller-General of Civil Aviation announced that he had effected a saving of some £400,000 on his estimates and expressed his official regrets that he was not allowed to divert any of this to the saving of an industry which had by now become practically non-existent. A few weeks ago it was announced that Aircraft Transport and Travel Limited, the first of the two companies to start the Paris service in the summer of 1919, had been compelled to retire from the field and, after continuing running the service with astonishing regularity through

months of heavy financial loss, had given up operations. And now, when only one firm running a regular service of any kind remains in existence, the Government announce the grant of a subsidy in the precise terms recommended by Lord Weir's Committee nine months ago, with the sole exception that the maximum total expenditure in the financial year 1921-22 is limited to £60,000.

It has therefore taken the Government four years to come round to the view which has repeatedly been impressed upon them by experts that this industry, upon which the Royal Air Force is admittedly relying for its capacity for rapid expansion in time of war, cannot live without State aid in the early stages of its development. Meanwhile several thoroughly sound firms with years of experience behind them have been forced into liquidation, and many first-class designers and skilled engineers have been scattered to all parts of the earth and the effects of their special training lost through their becoming merged in other industries. Had the attitude been one of consistent expressed opposition to the principle of a subsidy, one could have at least understood it, but there has never been anything approaching a statement of policy, and one always felt that the Cabinet realised the need for it but shirked the issue, and would not meet it until absolutely compelled. Had the action now taken been decided upon two years or even one year ago, the position might have been saved, but as it is one fails to see how the subsidy can have any real beneficial effect for at least another year. One thing is abundantly clear, and that is that it will certainly have to be repeated next year, as there will not be time for any resuscitation of the industry to take place before the end of the financial year 1921-22. Any attempt to form a fresh aircraft transport company, even if made immediately, could not possibly mean active flying operations for at least twelve months; as it would take quite that time to collect the trained staff required and obtain the necessary machines, which must be of fresh designs, as there are none but obsolescent converted war machines in existence to-day. When one thinks of the firms that have failed during the last twelve months, and the skilled designers who have become either lost to aviation or have taken their knowledge to America and elsewhere, it is difficult to restrain one's bitterness. Relief at the announcement of the long hoped-for State assistance is quite overshadowed by regrets that it has come too late to save so many good businesses.

[It should be remembered that Government realisation of the state of the national finances is quite recent. After the Armistice heavy gambling in money suggested that there was plenty of it about. At present, it seems a dubious policy to assist with Government money any industry which is not self-supporting. Civil aviation will come in time; the question is whether the Government can afford to hurry up its establishment.—Ed. S.R.]

VISION AND DESIGN.

MR. ROGER FRY* is a learned artist who never stagnates in pedantic scholarship, and widely recognised as a most interesting critic of ancient art. When he carries his principles from the Old Masters to the modern, he leaves a comparatively placid region for a battlefield of opinion, and whatever faction he leads must encounter active hostility. But his book of essays should be read by all students of art, particularly those who disagree with him. His lucidity and moderation should stimulate clear thinking among his opponents. The book has also an interest for persons concerned, not so much with art itself, as with the phenomenon of the artist, his psychology and position in the social state. It is only a selection, and some papers which excited controversy, noticeably 'Line as a means of expression in modern art,' have not been reprinted, but there is enough to give a clue to the author's development during twenty years. He is thoroughly modern and progressive in his breadth of view and avoidance of dogmatism. The assurance of apparent certainties indulged in by some of his

predecessors is displaced by a more cautious spirit of scientific inquiry. We realise now that we are only at the beginning of discovery.

Mr. Fry surveys art from China to Peru, and has made the fullest use of primitive art. His judgments are affected by the growing modern sense that, in the history of art as in other things, a thousand years are but as yesterday, and that our fundamental instincts and emotions, however we smother them, are not so very different from those of the cavemen of Altamira.

His last words give the tone of his argument:—

"As to the value of the æsthetic emotion, it is clearly infinitely removed from those ethical values to which Tolstoy would have confined it. It seems to be as remote from actual life and its practical utilities as the most useless mathematical theorem. One can only say that those who experience it feel it to have a peculiar quality of 'reality' which makes it a matter of infinite importance to their lives. Any attempt I might make to explain this would probably land me in the depths of mysticism. On the edge of that gulf I stop."

It seems that Tolstoy's acid examination of the irreconcilable difference existing in works on æsthetics was, for Mr. Fry and others, the starting-point of much fruitful speculation. Tolstoy demolished the conceptions of taste, the beautiful, the true and so on, prevalent during the 18th century and part of the 19th. He conducted his argument with great skill, but his conclusions were no better than those he ridiculed. That he, an artist himself, should have been led to them is only one more example of the odd effects of æsthetic reasoning on the human mind. The ordinary artist, who devotes little time to mental gymnastics, is naturally a bad guide in such matters. Usually he overstates his case for the combative purposes of the moment. Thus, one artist says:—

"L'art, c'est la ronde bosse."

Another (Manet) says:—

"Plus c'est plat, plus c'est l'art; faisons des cartes à jouer."

We should be unwise to expect from these artists a consistent carrying out of such simple principles. One must discount the exaggeration in all such utterances to get at what was in the artist's mind. But Tolstoy, of course, is different. He had thoroughly reasoned out his position, and his medium was literature. At least he cleared the ground for those who came after him.

Tolstoy drew attention to the conclusions of Vêron, according to whom "art is the manifestation of emotion transmitted externally by a combination of lines, forms, colours, or by a succession of movements, sounds, or words subjected to certain rhythms." This definition is the starting-point of more recent investigators, who have concentrated on the separation of the essential forms or rhythms from the unessential—"the romantic overtones of life which are the usual bait by which men are induced to accept a work of art." About thirty years ago Mr. Berenson began to separate the "illustrative factors"—that is, "everything which in a work of art appeals to us, not for any intrinsic quality, as of colour or form or composition, contained in the work of art itself, but for the value the thing represented has elsewhere, whether in the world outside, or in the mind within"—from others, "tactile values," "space composition," &c., which embrace the qualities of design and three-dimensional expression; the latter factors being superior to the former in determining our ultimate judgments of art. Here we have "la vérité première" of MM. Ozenfant and Jeanneret, "the necessity of the predominance of the plastic over the descriptive." It is about to this point, with personal differences of interpretation, that Mr. Fry had reached in his 'Essay in Aesthetics' of 1909. Behind all developments of this theory of essentials is the enormous influence of Cézanne.

Throughout Mr. Fry's writings is a growing conviction that there is a special æsthetic quality in works of art, extremely elusive, but apparently consisting of relations of form, or more precisely "the spatial relations of plastic volumes." Our reaction to these relations is the æsthetic emotion. To understand more

*Vision and Design. By Roger Fry. Chatto & Windus 25s. net.

about this emotion we must "isolate the purely æsthetic feeling from the whole complex of feelings which may and usually do accompany the æsthetic feeling when we regard a work of art." It is an emotion to which the artist is peculiarly sensitive, and a work which possesses significant formal relations is the outcome of an endeavour to express an idea rather than to create a pleasing object. There follows a divorce between "pure" art and the ordinary emotions of life, and "the artist of the new movement is moving into a sphere more and more remote from that of the ordinary man." Mr. Clive Bell declares that representation of nature is entirely irrelevant. Mr. Fry reasonably holds that this is going too far, since "even the slightest suggestion of the third dimension in a picture must be due to some element of representation." The plastic arts are, in fact, the expression of æsthetic feeling by means of plasticity, which is found solely in the phenomena of reality.

We follow Mr. Fry's æsthetic experiences and his analysis of them with the greatest interest, but we do not conclude that the art of the future will be entirely without the ordinary emotions of life. So long as emotional matter extraneous from the purely æsthetic is kept under proper control, it may even enhance the true value of the work of art. Experience of any kind has its value—if it is genuine and personal, not second-hand, or the reflexion of a convention. Suppose a literature in which words are used with little or no relation to their ordinary meaning, but as forms whose combination will produce the æsthetic emotion (specimens of such a literature exist, of course, already); would the greatest exponent of such an art excel the great poets whose creations, besides producing æsthetic emotion, give us so much else out of the fullness of their humanity? To cut away all "overtones," all "illustrative" and dramatic qualities, from any art which has made use of them, would be a definite loss. It would deprive Mr. Fry of a great part of the pleasure he takes in Claude. But after all, as he says, in the house of art there are many mansions. For ourselves, we cling to Cézanne: "Il faut de l'imitation et même un peu de trompe-l'oeil: cela ne nuit pas si l'art y est."

WOMEN'S DRESS AND THE PRESS.

WE are well aware that this is a "useless" article: the Daughters of Zion were lavish enough in Isaiah's day, and with our own eyes we have seen pre-historic fashion-plates in the Cretan caves which are vastly more elaborate than the apron of leaves which Mother Eve cut and sewed in the Garden of our primal shame. But here we write for men; and already we feel their throb of sympathy and thanks for having touched upon an incurable ill.

It was, we believe, Lord Northcliffe's shrewd idea to persuade our big drapers, and dress-folk generally, to take large space in the daily papers, and desert their old advertising fields. But primarily this was a Yankee notion: the "Napoleon of Newspapers," as New York styles his Lordship, is the first to admit the cuteness of American journalism on its business side. And Lord Northcliffe is esteemed a very great man over there.

In New York and Chicago there are no weekly journals for ladies—all titles and tattle; cat-shows, and dog-shows, and eager "write-ups" for the West-end shops. Over there the great stores and all establishments of dress and "dope," from hats to shoes, from furs to silks and corsets, from scents to lip-salve and vanishing creams, spend vast sums in the daily and Sunday newspapers.

Some New York drapers like Altman's, Lord and Taylor's, and John Wanamakers, contract for nearly five hundred full pages in a year, with editorial cooings and suasion thrown in as a makeweight of potent inducement. This is the system which Lord Northcliffe's genius brought from the United States to his own group of papers. And so great was its success that the practice spread, until the weekly ladies' papers were forced into drastic changes through fallen revenues. The *Englishwoman* has gone under altogether, as we noted last week.

It is a great pity that our Eves should be tempted in this way every few hours. That the plan was a fine thing for the dress-folk was glaringly evident throughout the War. True, at the outset there was a feeble wave of economy, a vague purpose of amendment with suitable and "sensible" dress. But the official notices commending patriotic soberness in dress soon disappeared from the hoardings.

Shabbiness was the briefest of all fashions. It was whirled away like the traditional snowflake in hell, and Babylonian orgies of dress took its place. Even in winter, women crossed the slushy streets in broad day with bare bosoms and the briefest of skirts which showed transparent silk stockings, and patent leather shoes that lived a brief life at three or four guineas a pair.

Never were dress fabrics so costly or so delicate; never were the Lyons looms so busy, nor the ribbon-mills of St. Etienne on the Loire. The Opera Quarter of Paris was not in the War. Designers in the *grandes maisons* were ever intent upon preposterous *fantaisies*—we apologise for this gibberish, but fashion is enthroned in France and shrouded in an aura of mystery which deludes none but its own mindless victims.

For the hierarchy of fashion is no more elusive or dim than the hierarchy of Carmelite House, met in solemn conclave over to-morrow's or next week's stunts for the middle sheets. Fashion is merely the shearing of women the world over, from London to Buenos Aires. They must be given no rest. They must be kept buying. They are tempted with new stuffs and garments of new name—the "jumper" is a notable instance of this.

Hats come and go quicker than leaves on the trees. There are fashions not only in gowns and wraps, but also in underwear. That is now of the most costly *crêpe de chine* with extravagant embroidery, and a set of it can run into the price of a first-rate suit of tweeds for a man.

Moreover, there are fashions in hosiery and gloves, in handbags and handkerchiefs, in perfumes, cosmetics, even in toy dogs—these last in turn with fashions of their own—fur coats, jewelled collars and so on, to say nothing of canine surgeons at their bark and call, who prescribe for doggyish over-eating and grow rich upon women's folly. The breast of a partridge served by a flunkey to Fido on a silver salver is a wicked fact, not a silly fiction taken from the Bolshevik propaganda.

We once visited a Dog's-Toilet Club in Bond Street, and were not amused, but only saddened, at the sights to be seen there, knowing all the mitigable sorrow which lies at the heart of the world. We have spoken with a Belgravian canine "vet." who should surely be persuaded to write his memoirs—of course, for publication after he was dead and buried. Otherwise, the man would be branded as a fantastic liar, besides exposing himself to the risk of a violent end at the hands of the Maenads who paid him fantastic fees for their pets.

It is common knowledge that the profits of drapers, furriers, *modistes*, and the beauty trades grew greater and greater with each year of the war—that blast of madness which killed and maimed millions of men and left the world hungry and sullen and sore.

Harrod's and Selfridge's, Barker's, Peter Robinson, Dickins & Jones, Swan & Edgar—these houses did better, as the world's agony increased. We have read their business reports, and no remarks of ours could touch the women more shrewdly than the glowing words of each Chairman of Directors, who praised by implication the bird-like flocks who chattered and fought at the bargain counters during the notorious season "sales."

We are sorry to see that even the *Times* now stoops to the drapers' "write-up." The *Times* is careful to put the austere abbreviation "advt." at the foot of "An Invitation" from Swan & Edgar, with news of the 45-guinea frock which is now so reduced as to be within the reach of the steel-worker's wife. But no warning "advt." is printed below the Lady Correspondent's babble of bargains from Marshall or Debenhams; for this is news—this is read as editorial matter,

and so carries greater weight with women readers, who must be made to spend more and more for the sake of advertisers on the other page.

We cannot but regret this pandering, which is now pretty general in our newspapers. Women need no inducement to frittering away money, and we have no doubt that the popular press played a notable part in piling up the enormous profits which the hierarchs of dress secured during the War.

But, when all is said, we realise that this is a useless article. We have no illusions as to the effect of reproach or appeal implied in it. Yet how much good our women could do with their money, if they were less lavish in dress, and set aside even a little for some worthy cause! Could not the great ladies of society stand a little ridicule, and give a lead against extravagance?

The other day Lord Weardale drew a terrifying and heartrending picture of starvation and death facing countless children in the city of Vienna. Nearer home, Viscount Knutsford can talk of closing the London Hospital through lack of funds. But do our women care? Is not the £500 fur coat a daily fact of the shop windows? Was not £50,000 paid for a rope of pearls during the War?

Why not adopt some poor baby instead of a horrid little dog? Why not find a clever boy or girl among the classes who have no chance, and pay for a good education? The opportunities are limitless; but unhappily, when it comes to dress, the spirit of woman is barely willing to resist, and the flesh much more than weak.

FLASHES OF SILENCE.

"THREE minutes!" exclaimed a sportsman to his companions, as a prelude to a story of thrilling adventure, "three minutes! I wonder if either of you fellows have any idea how long three minutes can be?" "I was about that time proposing," said one of them—still a bachelor. "And I have sat in a dentist's chair!" pleaded the other. Had there been an amateur actor present, he might have urged, "And I have 'dried up,' while the prompter was busy." Few people realize what an eternity an involuntary wait of even a few seconds seems on the stage.

No one but a really great artist would successfully hold in absolute silence and in solitary possession of the stage the attention of a modern audience for three solid minutes. We were glad therefore to read in an obituary notice of Lady Monckton an appreciative reference to that flash of silence which was her great moment in 'Jim the Penman,' by the late Sir Charles Young. We well recollect her performance at the trial trip, a March matinée in 1886. Seated at her writing table with cheque book in her hand, we can see her now. First the vague suspicion that something was wrong; then the gradual process whereby that suspicion was converted into the conviction that she, the devoted wife, held in her hand conclusive proof that her husband was a forger. Last of all, the horror of realization.

Three minutes! About the time it takes to win a Derby and, like Jeddah, Signorinetta, and Aboyeur, to pass from outsiders into the aristocracy of classical winners: about the time it takes for the Tellers to collect their figures, bow thrice to Mr. Speaker, and announce the result of a division that may upset the policy of a Government, and influence the future of an Empire.

We can recall two other similar silences on the stage, each a masterpiece of consummate art. It took the late Arthur Cecil, the best Box that ever lodged with Serjeant Bouncer, about that time to prepare his breakfast, and look for his rasher of bacon lying snug in his trouser pocket the while. Who can forget his face, when, after a gesture of despair at futile searchings in places possible and impossible, he drove his hands into his pockets to find there the beloved rasher! The joyous look of surprise that possessed his every feature, the tenderness with which his treasure was laid on his cleaned gridiron to be soothed by the strains of Sullivan's lovely lullaby!

There was a third performance also by a great

comedian, as artistic in its way; but the recollection is not so pleasing. We recall George Honey, the original Eccles in 'Caste,' filling his pipe when in Eccles's normal condition. Perhaps the recollection is marred by our remembrance (fortunately not as an eye-witness) of the terrible tragedy that followed on a revival, when Honey was stricken by paralysis on the stage, and the audience in its ignorance thought Eccles was even more grotesque than usual, and the curtain fell amid the wonted laughter. Three remarkable performances, but to Lady Monckton belongs the chief prize: every second of her three minutes was serious, intense, and a crescendo; one false move would have spoilt the whole effect. We can recall no other three minutes on the stage equally arresting, and satisfactory to the expert judgment.

CORRESPONDENCE

IMPERIALISM AND TAXATION.

SIR,—One learns from your correspondence columns that the search for a Conservative Party has begun again, but I venture to foretell that the search will be useless, unless individual Conservatives will consent to the putting of economy of administration in the forefront of their programme. Millions of electors are seriously injured and alarmed by Government extravagance, but they have no party pledged to economy to whom they can appeal; and therefore they are apathetic, since it does not seem worth while bestirring oneself, when the only choice lies between the Coalitionists who are destroying the taxpayer by inches, and the Socialists who would destroy him by the ell. It takes, we know, a good many inches to make an ell, but the deliberate and systematic wastefulness of the last two years has done much to make the doom of the property-owner certain—unless he wakes up forthwith—and since Coalitionists can offer no hope of amendment, there is little wonder if the taxpayer seems to be fast sinking into the lethargy of despair.

Most Conservative M.P.'s who tied themselves to Mr. George's triumphal car at the General Election, still feel bound to speak of him—at least in public—as a being almost divine in intuition and ability, but the business men of the country fear and detest his cleverness. No doubt the Premier has a wonderful way of dodging present difficulties by means of drafts on the future, but this cannot go on for ever, and the time must come when the scarcity of capital—due to artificially high wages and to excessive taxation—and lack of employment will lead to industrial and political chaos.

In a manufacturing and trading country like ours, the best test of material prosperity is the "state of the funds"—the value, that is, of Government securities—and these, instead of improving as the result of two years of peace, have gone steadily down. Unfortunately, Mr. George has never been a business man, while Mr. Law feels bound to forget that he himself was one once; and so the extreme seriousness of bad trade, lack of employment, shrinking profits, and financial stringency fails to receive much attention at headquarters. Unemployment is to be met by makeshift devices, and by doles and grants which mean the endowment of idleness; but the Premier smiles at a state of affairs which would have driven Gladstone crazy, and is quite unconcerned at the fact that people like myself who were cajoled—one might almost say, dragooned—into buying War Loan a couple of years ago now cannot sell the stuff except at a loss of 10 per cent. This country was made by private thrift, and is ruined by public extravagance, but so long as there is a pound in the Exchequer wherewith to buy votes, so long will the Premier continue in his policy of jobbery, bribery, and corruption. The war destroyed our manufacturing and financial supremacy, and the only hope of regaining something of our ancient position lay in assiduous and increased production, but in his passionate eagerness to secure the votes by which alone—as he thinks—he can keep place and power, Mr. George consented to the shorter hours which in most cases have reduced the productive capacity of our iron-works, engineering shops, factories, and mills by some

12 per cent. Moreover, more leisure means more spending time, from which follows a demand for higher wages for a shorter day, while in too many cases a considerable amount of the energy which was formerly used by the wage-earner in the production of goods is now used in the pursuit of pleasure. Such a statement may seem harshly and even cruelly critical, but we must remember—whether we belong to the taxpaying classes or the privileged masses—that pleasure seeking in a time of stress following the greatest and most disastrous war in history, can only be indulged in with moderation, unless, as a nation, we are prepared to go under. To-day, owing to very high wages and excessive and extortionate taxation, the goods which we produce are too dear for our foreign customers, and unless we can lower the cost, we shall lose our foreign markets and millions of wage-earners will be out of work. Nothing could better illustrate the futility of the attempt to reconcile economic facts with Socialistic theories than the present position of the Housing Question. All over the country houses are being built by local authorities at a cost of £1,000 each, which will have to be let at 10s. a week, or £26 a year. In other words, each house or cottage will yield, after providing for upkeep and insurance, 2 per cent. on the capital expended, leaving the ratepayers to find the other 4 per cent.—a loss of £40 per cottage.

Such insane finance with its rapid depletion of our already straitened resources is bound to end in ruin, but so taken were the masses by the Premier's crazy promises, that it will be difficult to persuade them of the folly of costly State "reconstruction," until they have felt the pinch of the poverty which must result. It would therefore seem best first to attack Government expenditure on its Imperial side.

The average Conservative with his ingrained patriotism would no doubt feel very reluctant to take such a line but, unfortunately, it is no longer a question of what we like, or what we dislike, but of what is possible for us with a millstone of debt hung about our necks, and the Labour leaders striving continually to add to our burdens. Moreover, the war, and the revolutions which resulted from the Fight-to-a-Finish policy, have changed all things, and among others, the British Empire. To-day, "the British Empire" is merely a rhetorical expression, for it has been replaced by a Federation of virtually independent States—formerly "Colonies"—and though we still retain our vast Asiatic dominions, we are pledged to give these, sooner or later, Home Rule. The "Colonies" make no pretence of hiding their new rôle as independent nations, and are doing their best to get rid of the obligation of appeal in legal cases to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. When appellants no longer have to come to London, the last trace of Imperial authority will have vanished, leaving the purely sentimental link afforded by the Crown as the sole bond between the Dominion of Canada, the Union of South Africa, the Commonwealth of Australia, and the Mother Country.

The tocsin of the Russian revolution was the death-knell of Imperialism everywhere—if you will allow me to repeat myself—and the sooner we recognise this, and get Mr. Kipling to compose a new Recessional to mark our retreat from an untenable position, the better. The "Colonies," having grown up and come of age, mean to assert their independence—indeed, as members, *in esse* or *in posse* of the League of Nations, they are already doing so—and as a Conservative of more than 40 years' standing, I fail to see why I should continue to pay away more than half my actual income in taxation, in order—among other things—to provide for the "safety" of what is to-day, alas, an imaginary Empire. Relieved of the greater part of our "Imperial obligations," we might reduce the navy by one half, and our enormously costly army in the same proportion. The phrase "The British Empire" is, I repeat, in the main, a rhetorical expression, and inasmuch as our former "Colonies" are perfectly capable of defending themselves, I see no sense in England being sacrificed to the Imperialism of Lord Milner, Lord Curzon, and Colonel Amery.

C. F. RYDER.

THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY.

SIR,—In 1915, instead of joining the Asquith Ministry, the Unionist leaders should have demanded a general election, which was then due by virtue of the Parliament Act forced through the House of Lords under dire and unconstitutional threats. The sound and patriotic policy was for the Conservatives to maintain a partisan attitude and to go to the electors on a partisan ticket. Inasmuch as the Conservative party is the party most trusted by Englishmen in times of danger, the reasoning of the Unionist leaders should have been: "Our party is the party most trusted by the nation; it is the party to carry on the war; to get our party into power, we must go to the nation for its authority; and to strive for that authority is therefore the most patriotic and constitutional course."

Such a course would have given a chance to the electors to say constitutionally which Government they desired for the carrying on of the war with Germany. By avoiding a general election, the Unionist leaders cheated the voters of their right, and they did it, not as they fondly or hypocritically imagined, from patriotic motives, but in order to get the sweets of office without working for them. It was therefore something in the nature of a corrupt bargain which they made with Mr. Asquith.

The objection that a general election in 1915 would have disturbed the nation and impeded its military efforts is fallacious. The country was already disturbed by national registration and other unusual proceedings; a parliamentary election, the machinery for which already existed, and to which the nation had for hundreds of years been accustomed, would have had no disturbing effect upon our military operations. To strain at the gnat of a general election, and to swallow the camel of national registration, compulsory service, Defence of the Realm Act, and so on, was absurd.

Had an election taken place the Unionists would have romped in, and much subsequent trouble, waste, bloodshed, and misery would have been avoided. Messrs. Asquith, Lloyd George and Co. would have gone into Opposition, there either to criticise patriotically the conduct of the war, and to keep the Government up to the mark, if necessary, or (and this would have better suited the nature of the Radical animal) they would have shown themselves lukewarm patriots, creators of difficulties for the nation in its struggle, and apparent well-wishers and aiders of Germany. As it happened, these latter qualities and activities had due scope when the Radicals were in power, and were proportionately dangerous, whereas in Opposition their teeth would have been drawn by the votes of the nation.

The pressing necessity now is for the Conservatives to get new leaders, and to throw over all those tainted by contact with the Coalition. Inasmuch as the country is longing for Conservatism, any delay in hoisting the banner of the party is treachery to the party and to the nation. The longer the delay, the more implicated are we in the results of the Radical orgy of waste and corruption. Already we have seen at Hereford an issue joined between an anti-waste Liberal and a Conservative supporter of the Government, and therefore saddled with all the political crimes of the past ten years.

The party programme should include—

1. Abolition of all new Government departments, such as those of Health and Transport.
2. General repeal of war legislation.
3. Reduction of pre-war official staffs.
4. A measure of protection for our industries by way of retaliatory tariffs.
5. A reduction of the rate for public education to fourpence in the pound. Education is a luxury and not a necessity. Preferably public education should be abolished.
6. Emigration within the Empire should be assisted.

7. Restriction of alien immigration, in respect of which the will of the nation has been persistently thwarted by the present Government and its bureaucracy.
8. Expulsion of parasitical foreigners who live by work originated in this country, and whose presence causes unemployment among our own people.

G. L. HALES.

SIR,—Would it not have been more to the point if "A Voter" had answered some of the numerous questions that he asks? A mere orgy of interrogations is never very helpful. In the meantime, I will do my best. The bulk of the Conservative Party is at present inside the Coalition Party; it therefore follows that, if you dislike the one, you dislike the other. Possibly both are "played out"; it all depends upon your definition of the term. English politics may be in a rotten condition, but have they ever been in any other? If "A Voter" is not going to vote for a Conservative at the next election, whom does he propose to support? The country may or may not go under; personally I doubt it. There are several Conservative leaders in the field as alternatives to Mr. Bonar Law, e.g., Lord Salisbury, Lord Robert Cecil, and Sir William Joynson Hicks; judging by the general trend of his letter I should say that "A Voter" cannot do better than follow the latter, but I am afraid he will find himself one of a small minority. Finally, I hope he will pardon me for advising him to cheer up.

ONE WHO GAVE UP VOTING LONG AGO.

ENGLAND AND THE CONSERVATIVES.

SIR,—“An Englishman” says, “The question Where is the Conservative Party? can only be answered by another question, Where is England?” It is only too true, and in a much wider sense than the writer intended. All that is implied in the word England seems to be disappearing from some of the newspapers which call themselves Conservative, for they have taken to publishing articles which might have come straight out of the heart of Bright or Cobden.

There is one daily paper which is supposed to be the exponent of everything that is national and imperial. It printed a paper giving the impressions of a lady who had been in Ulster after visiting America. She is grieved and indignant with the Ulstermen because she finds that they are not very sensitive about the opinion of the United States: they actually take the liberty of being very much interested in their own concerns and their business and manufactures, and they are not inclined to sacrifice their prosperity and their very existence in order to curry favour with any other people whatsoever. To this lady, Ulster seems the black spot in the British Empire: its fault is that it retains the old backbone, which has disappeared elsewhere. The German newspapers hinted at something of the kind during the war, when they said that Sir Edward Carson looked like the only Elizabethan character in the Cabinet.

Another daily newspaper, which is supposed to be Conservative or National Liberal, has allowed Mr. Jerome K. Jerome to lecture his countrymen on the vice of Patriotism. He must be one of those great men (like Goethe and Defoe, to say nothing of Wilkie Collins) who are born without a patriotic sense. It is an eccentricity of genius. He thinks that patriotism is earthy, sensual, immoral; only fit for our rude forefathers, and quite unworthy of enlightened people like himself. He asks, What is this England? And his answer plainly shows that he thinks it is only a geographical expression. He says that the phrase “My country right or wrong,” is an insult to God: but he is quite mistaken if he thinks that this has ever been an English expression. It is one of Jonathan’s copy-right phrases, and was manufactured long ago, when there was a little difference of opinion with England. It has never been acclimatised here, and was never used seriously by the wildest Jingo in this country.

Articles such as these are only intended to persuade

England and Ulster to efface themselves for the benefit of mankind in general. Such things were provided in the old times by the organs of the Manchester Radical Party for the sake of those who had a taste for humbly, but they were never allowed in Conservative newspapers. They are singularly out of place now, when the war has strengthened the military feeling all over the Continent, as a French General has been saying, and when General Bernhardt’s book shows at least what Germany is thinking of: while outside Europe there are Japan and America, neither of them very humble-minded nations. One of them is arming to the teeth, and there is every prospect that the other will follow her example.

H.R.

OFFICIAL REPRISALS?

SIR,—I hope you will allow me to reply to Mr. Montagu Bain, who, in your issue of January 15th, takes exception to my first letter under the above heading.

First, he says that my comparison of Ireland and Belgium is “so childish that it may be left to itself.” That is kind of him. But I would point out that I drew this parallel solely to emphasise the futility of attempting to crush national sentiment by frightfulness, and that by my earlier remarks I expressly dissociated myself from the point of view of those who regard Ireland’s crimes with equanimity. I do not consider the two cases parallel beyond the point I have explained, nor did my previous letter imply that I did so.

Second, Mr. Bain has the goodness to inform me that Ireland does not wish to be separated from Great Britain from any national sentiment—indeed Ireland has no national sentiment—but merely as a convenient way of evading her share of the heavy load of war debt which Great Britain has incurred. Ye gods! Where is Mr. Bain’s sense of humour? Does he seriously think that Terence McSwiney gave his life in order that his country might evade the National Debt?

I may quite possibly—as Mr. Bain suggests—be ill instructed as to current events, but at least I know that it takes something more than the hope of escaping debt to nerve a man (however misguidedly) to die for his country. Mr. Bain’s theory is the funniest thing I have heard for a long time.

IRISHMAN.

SIR,—Your issue of January 8 had a letter, under head of “Official Reprisals?” in which the writer “Irishman” says, “Sinn Fein claims are unreasonable, and impossible; her campaign of murder is abominable.” With these views every sensible person will agree; but when he seeks to find a parallel between their “frightfulness,” which has been truly Germanic, and the attitude of Belgium he outrages fact and reason. Peaceable Belgium arose, as the friends of those who were victims of cold-blooded midnight murderers arose, as those charged with maintenance of law and order in Ireland, rose, against the “frightful” campaign of Sinn Fein.

His further claim that “nowhere in Europe is national feeling so strong as in Ireland,” is equally devoid of truth. Even amongst the disloyal faction there are numerous divisions, while taken collectively they are utterly separated, cleft apart, as with the cleavage of a sword, from loyal Ireland: that Ireland whose sons rose at the first drum tap, and fell in their thousands in the late war, at the Empire’s call.

LASCELLES HASBROUCK.

THE DECLINE AND FALL OF NATIONS.

SIR,—About the Chinese whom you mention in the last paragraph of this excellent “leader.”

The product of a great Chinese industry (they produced then about 50 per cent. of the world’s supply) went suddenly badly down in price. The Chinese employers approached the coolies and at once induced them to accept less wages. Rather different from our labour!

OBSERVER.

THE CROWD AT TWICKENHAM.

SIR,—At the Rugby match last Saturday between England and Wales there was, I believe, a record attendance, and therefore some little extra discomfort in going and returning was to be expected. But I cannot think that the authorities, who appear from Press notices to plume themselves on their arrangements, deserve great credit. At the bottle-neck entrance motor-cars were allowed to come right up to the ground enclosure, and persons were allowed to struggle in the opposite direction to the crowd of some thousands trying to get out. Hysterical women made themselves ridiculous, and the public, as they did in the days of Theocritus at a festival, "pushed like pigs."

I suggest that in view of big matches at a future date the following improvements might be carried out for the regulation of the traffic:—

- (1) Cars should be kept back from this main entrance and their owners required to walk a few yards.
- (2) In the fence near the entrance which encloses one-side of the bottle-neck, a gate should be made, and a path across the field, which would take some of the outpouring mob.
- (3) The small stream of persons who wish to use the bottle-neck for walking in the opposite direction, should be asked to use another road, or kept back, until the huge crowd has emptied itself out of it.

The English crowd is not so considerate as it was. It has learnt since the War to indulge in selfish pushing, like the Labour party.

I noticed with some amusement and satisfaction that, when the game had begun, speculators with tickets for seats, and doubtless a largely enhanced idea of their value, were still offering them. Opposite the pavilion there was a row of empty benches clearly visible, so I presume that all the trafficking in seats at a premium did not come off.

The sale of leeks was a curious proof of national enthusiasm on the Welsh side. England of course has, or shows, no keenness of the kind.

RUGBEIAN.

BOOKS AND THE NATION.

SIR,—The 'Publishers' Circular and Booksellers' Record' for January 1st, announces an increase of 2,382 publications in 1920, as compared with the total for 1919. The largest proportion of increase is in books on fiction which have risen by 887, the lowest rises being in books on science, history and law respectively, whilst books on religion have decreased by 87. Just as we can tell the character and personality of a man from the books in his library, so surely from the above analysis can we draw certain interesting inferences with regard to the present condition of our country. Every irregularity nowadays is immediately explained as being the usual after effect of war (and certainly the first and finest English novels appeared not long after a great European war) but the point of interest in this case is whether the novel of to-day is really worthy of such supremacy.

Henry Fielding said: "To invent good stories and to tell them well, are possibly very rare talents, and yet I have observed few persons who have scrupled to aim at both." Furthermore, he insisted that the following qualities were absolutely essential to the writer of romance:—(1) Nature's gift of genius which includes invention and judgment in the sense of "a quick and sagacious penetration into the true essence of all the objects of our contemplation"; (2) a complete knowledge of history and belles lettres; (3) an understanding of the characters of men through intimate conversation with both high and low; (4) "a good heart" and a real sense of feeling. "The author who will make me weep," says Horace, "must first weep himself."

How many of our present day novelists can claim these qualities, and how many of their works will survive like those of Fielding and his contemporaries?

LEILA L. BAIN.

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THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR CONFERENCE.

Labour as an International Problem. A Series of Essays. Edited by E. John Solano. Macmillan. 18s. net.

CAPTAIN SOLANO'S book could scarcely have appeared at a more opportune moment. The first meeting of the Assembly of the League of Nations has been held, and although it is still too early to review dispassionately the results achieved, it is sufficiently clear that the enthusiasts and the doubters have alike been mistaken. The impotence of the League to handle large political issues is apparent, and the millenium is as far off as ever; but the prediction of those cynics who saw in the Assembly an unwieldy polyglot debating society has, happily, been falsified. By the setting up of a Court of International Justice and a number of technical organisations another step has been taken towards the peaceful adjustment of international differences, and in this direction the utility of the League has, within certain limits, been placed beyond doubt. In one way, however, enormous progress has been made, and in the domain of labour legislation those who believed that a lasting improvement in the condition of the workers and a better understanding between capital and labour could only be brought about by international action can point to one branch of the activities of the League in which many enduring results have already been obtained.

Although the first International Labour Conference was only held a little over a year ago, nine Draft Conventions and ten Recommendations have already been adopted by the necessary majorities. These cover a very wide range indeed—hours of work, unemployment, maternity benefits, night employment, child labour, and dangerous trades—and it is reasonably certain that most Governments will ratify the Draft Conventions, and take action on the Recommendations. This work can only be appreciated at its true value when it is remembered how cumbrous and uncertain were the methods of the past in attempting to secure common action by the nations, and how insignificant were the results.

How then has this great change come about? This is described in Captain Solano's book; not by his own pen, but by the happier method of presenting a series of essays by writers of various nationalities, who in one way or another have been associated with the movement; and as a preface, Captain Solano himself contributes an admirable introduction. To three men—Mr. George Barnes, Sir Malcolm Delevingne, and Mr. Butler—is due the whole credit of fashioning into practical shape the great idea of imposing upon Governments, while maintaining their sovereign rights intact, a treaty obligation to lay before their national Legislatures the conclusions adopted by a two-thirds majority at annual Conferences of representatives of Governments, employers and workers, and the obligation to declare formally the acceptance or rejection of the suggestions made. Mr. Barnes describes the scheme embodied in the Labour Covenant of the Treaty of Peace by which this result has been brought about; and Mr. Shotwell, in his essay does not exaggerate when he says that in the long history of political theory it would be hard to find a more interesting and suggestive experiment.

But although solid results have already been achieved, and although the future is full of promise, elements of weakness have appeared; and it should be the concern of all well-wishers of the organisation to guard against these dangers. It is sometimes forgotten that the Labour Covenant is based on a frank recognition of the capitalist system, and that the object of the organisation is to remove the defects of that system. There is here, therefore, no place for the Communist. It is also sometimes forgotten that the Covenant is based upon a recognition of the sovereign rights of each State, and that the Conference is not a super-Parliament to which Members of the League have surrendered their legislative functions, but a body entrusted

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with the task of making suggestions for legislation. To each State is reserved the discretion to accept or reject any suggestion made; but, although this is so, the Draft Conventions or Recommendations adopted at these Conferences possess an authority of their own, and the framers of the Covenant were right in believing that the force of international public opinion would do much to stimulate backward States to keep pace in social legislation with their neighbours. But the very fact that chief reliance is placed on this intangible force makes it all the more necessary that at these Conferences a spirit of reasonableness and compromise should prevail, and that a patient hearing should be given to those countries which claim special treatment, so that there may be no suspicion that a majority is attempting to force its will on a reluctant minority by mere weight of numbers.

The next element of weakness is in the Governing Body—the executive head of the whole organisation. By the shortsightedness of those responsible the position of the first Governing Body has been made almost impossible. It was brought into being by the three groups of representatives at Washington acting separately, but its unnatural parent, at the moment of its birth, cursed its own offspring, and by a formal resolution expressed dissatisfaction with its composition on the ground that out of the 24 members no less than 20 represented European countries. Resting, as it does, under this stigma, the usefulness of the first Governing Body has been impaired, since it does not enjoy the confidence of the members of the organisation. Captain Solano in his introduction, and Mr. Butler in his essay, deal with this paradoxical situation; and it is clear that a remedy will have to be found in order to secure that all parts of the world shall be represented, and that the Governing Body shall be truly international. The Council of the League had an opportunity to remedy the defect to some extent, but the appeal of India was rejected on grounds of expediency, although it seems clear from the facts given by Captain Solano that her claim was fully justified.

Finally the Bureau itself—on which the greatest responsibility rests—must in the first crucial years of its existence adopt a policy best calculated to ensure the success of the organisation as a whole. In this respect the most disquieting portion of the book is the contribution of M. Albert Thomas, the first Director of the International Labour Office; and his conception of the functions of the Bureau is strangely at variance with the views expressed by Mr. Barnes. The latter rightly regards the Bureau as the eyes and the ears of the Conference, and as a clearing house of information; and looks forward to the time when, through its intelligence work, it will become the mainspring of the activities of the whole organisation. M. Thomas, however, seems to reject this view, and in so doing travels, we fear, somewhat outside the four corners of the Covenant. He regards the Bureau as a creative organisation of a new type, which will concentrate its independent powers upon a policy of action; as a goad to stimulate reluctant States to adopt measures of social reform; as an educator of international public opinion; possibly as a supreme conciliator in times of industrial unrest; and, while mentioning, does not condemn, the view of those visionaries who regard the Bureau as destined ultimately to become a super-Parliament of Labour to which the national Legislatures of all countries will delegate their authority, and the body which will promulgate international laws binding upon all people. If this goal is ever to be reached, a declaration of this kind at the outset can only defeat its own object, and nothing is more calculated to alienate the sympathies of Government than the suspicion that Labour legislation will be dictated for use. Nothing, certainly, is more likely to prevent the adherence of the United States of America, and the organisation can never attain its full measure of usefulness while that country stands aloof.

Rather should the Bureau, by a scrupulous regard for the sovereign rights of States, and by an attitude of impartiality towards the conflicting interests of capital and labour, strive in the first crucial years to gain the

confidence of all parties, so that it may grow gradually in influence and authority and become better equipped to assist the organization to attain its high purpose. Happily the Bureau possesses in M. Thomas a Director of great gifts and strong personality, and we have full confidence that under his wise direction the dangers we have indicated will be avoided.

RESEARCH AND DOGMA.

The Earthen Vessel. By Pamela Glenconner. Preface by Sir Oliver Lodge. Lanc. 6s. net.

THERE is dissension among the spiritualists. For a long time Sir Arthur Conan Doyle has insisted that spiritualism is a new religion; poltergeists, telepathy, levitation, the ouija board (the "Here's Me!" of the spirit world), and all the elaborate machinery of Mr. Sludge and his satellites are providing, and will continue to provide, that wondrous revelation, that "light that never was on sea or land." But Lady Glenconner is one of the heretics. Spiritualism, she roundly declares, "is in no sense a religion." More: "it is certain that no subject suffers so richly at the hands of its adherents as this matter of Spiritualism, and I think the chief fault lies in the direction of confusing it with religion." Many to whom Sir Arthur's spookery and Mumbo-Jumboism have been as the very abomination of desolation will find in Lady Glenconner's plain record of various phenomena, very little to offend their reason. It is her interpretation of those phenomena that will arouse disagreement in those who are as yet content to study facts and collate them, rather than to invent theories for their explanation.

She believes that through the mediumship of Mrs. Osborne Leonard, controlled by "Feda" (already known to readers of Sir Oliver Lodge's "Raymond"), she has been in communication with her son, Edward Wyndham Tennant, who met his death in France during the war. In order to rule out as far as possible unconscious telepathy—which, it may be said, is usually advanced as the explanation of most "spirit" communications—Lady Glenconner, with the alleged help of her spirit communicator, adopted the Book-Test method which quite recently has become largely practised, and which appears to reduce to a minimum the possibility of fraud on the part of the medium. This method, in the words of Sir Oliver Lodge, "consists in specifying the number of a page in a book, itself indicated only by its numbered place on a given shelf in a bookcase whose position is described, in a house to which the medium need have had no access." On that given page a passage should be (and generally is) found conveying an intended message, or showing "a similarity in thought to what has otherwise been said." The page, the book, the shelf and the house are, of course, all indicated by the communicator—i.e., the "spirit." No fewer than twenty-seven of these Book-Tests are described in detail, many of which were successful in every particular, and most of which were successful up to a remarkable point; only two tests failed. Signed evidence is given wherever it appears to be necessary. But no experienced or impartial reader can doubt for a moment that the circumstances related by Lady Glenconner took place exactly as she states, for her method in carrying out the tests is not unscientific, and, when presenting facts, she is not influenced either by prejudice or feeling, though her interpretation of those facts may be prejudiced.

The explanation of these phenomena that most readily springs to the mind is chance-coincidence; but though chance-coincidence may dispose of a few instances, there are others it cannot possibly cover. The power of reading a closed book—if, indeed, there be such a power—has by some been attributed to hyperæsthesia, by others to clairvoyance; but to label a thing is not to explain it. Sir Oliver Lodge declares that this power is "not a new discovery," and, to our amazement, drags in Mr. Stainton Moses who, we had imagined, was as completely and eternally discredited as David Home and Madame Blavatsky. But Sir Oliver is candid enough about his own belief. "Some of the young fellows killed in the War have been very energetic and successful in getting tests through of this

rather difficult kind," though he admits that Raymond has not proved skilful in this particular method. Yet it does not require much ingenuity to construct other theories, less difficult of belief than that to which Sir Oliver has given credence, that would account for all the facts. But the human mind will believe what it wants to believe; desire must always blunt the keenest judgment and cloud the clearest eyes.

Lady Glenconner has been ill-advised to stray from her central purpose of simply offering evidence and leaving each individual reader to judge for himself as to the value of that evidence. Many sympathisers will be alienated by her dogmatism concerning dreams, for they will feel that an investigator who is capable of arriving at conclusions on matters of which practically nothing is known, is likely to be equally impulsive and empirical concerning phenomena of which only a little has been discovered. She declares that some day it will be found that sleep is "primarily a way of escape for the soul," and she flourishes the *ipse dixit* that "all mortals drink at this clear spring (*i.e.*, sleep), and thereby come to understand "the reason of suffering, comprehension of Divine Law, and reunion with those we call the Dead." This may or may not be nonsense. It is simply a statement unsupported by the slightest evidence. Again, her attack on the Book of Common Prayer not only has no connection whatever with the reality or otherwise of her communications from her dead son, but it is also shallow and inept, and can serve only to warn readers that a writer so sweeping in her condemnation, and so lacking in subtlety of thought and power of expression, is not likely to arrive at the very kernel of truth in any subject she studies. The Lent rites are mere "grave-worship"! The character of the Lent service is "unwholesome; steeped in a blind mood of solemn misery"! And so on. Strong opinions, as we know, are part and parcel of the psychology of spiritualists, and, when expressed on their own particular subject, only raise a smile; but why drag in religion, when, as Lady Glenconner asseverates, spiritualism must not be confounded with it?

DREAMS OF WORLD PEACE.

Studies in Statecraft. By Sir Geoffrey Butler. Cambridge University Press. 10s. net.

THE League of Nations may be our salvation, or it may be a delusion, but in idea it is not new. The Middle Ages witnessed the existence of a similar plan in the dual control of the universal Church and Empire; it failed, however, partly because the intrusion of Mahommedanism prevented the two powers from being universal, partly because they never could settle their respective spheres of authority. So the nations arose, and with their growth came the desire of the tender-hearted to prevent them from coming to blows with one another. Philippe de Commines, who was a bit of a pessimist, maintained that God had created one country to be a thorn in the side of its neighbour; the Scotch of the English, the Hungarians of the Turk and so on. But more sanguine spirits imagined that some superior council could be composed for the settlement of quarrels. The progress of time having somewhat dimmed the reputations of most of those philosophers, the Prefector in Diplomatic History at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, has turned his learning to good purpose in these biographical essays on Postel, Crucé and other predecessors of M. Briçonnet and Lord Robert Cecil.

Bishop Roderic of Zamora, the first on Sir Geoffrey Butler's list, hardly belongs to the category of league-mongers. Still his dialogue on peace and war is one of the manuscript treasures in the Corpus library, and lying under Sir Geoffrey's hand, it was well worth a study on its own account. The Bishop was a man of grim humour, since he took as his intellectual chopping-block the scholar Platina, who happened at the moment to be his prisoner in the Castle of St. Angelo. Though the argument is inflated by theological and Aristotelian analogies, the Bishop sticks fairly close to business, and scores a shrewd point or two off his pacifist opponent. Platina's contention that

all who take the sword shall perish by the sword, is countered by the remark that John the Baptist addressed the Roman soldiers in terms at least tacitly approving of their occupation. War, according to the Bishop, is first and foremost the concern of the community, and only to a much less degree of individuals. Clearly he has no use for the conscientious objector.

The French "civilians," François Connan and the rest of them, fail to carry matters much farther, though they anticipated modern thought in many ways, notably in their contention that subjects had the right of getting rid of a tyrannical sovereign. "Ejiciendus est," they stoutly declared, "communi suorum decreto." But Postel, the wandering crackbrained man of learning, in the course of his delvings into Oriental languages, philology, astrology, and other sciences, did undoubtedly hit upon a mystical union which he called "the concord of the world." It was, however, not to be a genuine league of equals, but a universal monarchy under the hegemony of France. His patriotic reasoning sounds extravagant, until Sir Geoffrey reminds us that in Sir Walter Raleigh's 'History of the World' Noah and Joshua stand side by side with Tudor kings. Postel pointed out that of the sons of Noah, Shem's spiritual jurisdiction had descended to the Pope. There remained, through the curse resting on Ham, Japheth, the secular brother. Now Japheth had a son Gomer, who was obviously the ancestor of the Gauls. It followed that the kingdom of France inherited the duties of Japheth.

Sully's familiar 'Grand Design' rested on more solid foundations than the cloudy speculations of Postel. He would have grouped the Powers together, six hereditary monarchies, five elective monarchies, and four republics; they would have formed a General Council of sixty-six chosen from all proportionately, and that body would have pacified quarrels and determined civil, political, and religious questions in general. The idea looked decidedly well on paper, even if there were difficulties in the way of its realization. The Papacy, for example, could not be expected to acquiesce in its position as one of the elective monarchies, ranking on an equality with Poland. To Sully, however, in his old age the 'Grand Design' became a good deal more than an idea. By fabricating history he erected it into a diplomatic instrument which Henri IV. and Elizabeth knew all about, and which had actually influenced negotiations. Was this distortion of events merely the wandering of a senile mind, the exaggeration of an octogenarian vanity? No, it was more deliberate than that; it was an attempt to foist on posterity as a working agency a fantasy that, as Sully must have been painfully aware, belonged to Utopia. Sir Geoffrey instances as a parallel the bombastic mendacity of the memoirs of Bassompierre. More to the point would seem to be the aggrandisement by Machiavelli of Cæsar Borgia, whose violence and vacillation he secretly despised, into a superman worthy of supporting the theme of 'The Prince.'

More modern in tone than the 'Grand Design' is 'Le Nouveau Cynée' of Emerich Crucé. Religious toleration was dear to him; so was freedom of trade. He even anticipated the doctrine of mandate, in his contention that a council of ambassadors should act as "trustees and hostages of public peace." Crucé, however, possessed a saving sanity in which some modern pacifists are lacking. He perceived that arms must be used to extirpate piracy; and though his assembly should meet discontents half-way and appease them by gentle means, he allowed that it could use force in case of necessity. That is the worst of all these visions for the regeneration of mankind. The more they change, the more the fundamental facts of human nature remain the same.

A DECLINE AND FALL?

The House of Commons and Monarchy. By Hilaire Belloc. Allen and Unwin. 7s. 6d. net.

WHENEVER Mr. Belloc has anything to say, we listen to him with admiration, and frequently with approval. He has a way with him that compels respect; a model style, lucidity, and confidence. Even

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when we disagree, we admire. But these very qualities sometimes, as in the present instance, prove his undoing. His very confidence betrays him; his clear thinking makes him muddle-headed. He is so sure of himself that he is in danger of becoming a "one-idea" man; he has all a Frenchman's logic, and he uses it relentlessly, and (quite unconsciously, of course) unscrupulously, to support his one idea. His obsession is "The Faith." In his reasoning we can detect something of the Catholic's casuistry.

In 'The House of Commons and Monarchy' he seeks to prove that, Parliament having declined in public esteem, and therefore in power, it must shortly be superseded by another form of government—to wit, Monarchy. To do this, he first of all traces the decline of real Monarchy and the rise of Parliament in this country, and he finds the root cause of both to have been the suppression of the Monasteries. This is ingenious, but, unfortunately, historically inaccurate. His zeal for the Papacy has led him astray.

Mr. Belloc's observations on the nature of aristocracies are sound. It is true that the essential attributes of aristocracy are respect from within and respect from without; that the British Parliamentary system is an aristocratic oligarchy, and that, when it loses its aristocratic attributes, it must decline and fall. But has it lost its respect for itself? And has it, by its corruption, as Mr. Belloc asserts, lost the respect of those whom it governs? The House of Commons to-day takes itself almost ludicrously seriously. True, it is grossly venal, but it has always been that. Are we to suppose that the House which sheltered the Dukes of Newcastle and Grafton or the vile Henry Fox was a model of parliamentary virtue? The venality of Parliament in the first half of the eighteenth century cannot be exaggerated. As for public disrespect, there were then not sufficient means for its dissemination for it to be so widespread as to-day; there was no popular education, no daily press. Yet there were not wanting even then violent attacks on Parliament, as witness the *North Briton*, the letters of Junius, and a petition from the Lord Mayor for the removal from office of a dishonest minister.

It is not that Parliament is more corrupt to-day, but that the public conscience is more alive. Artificially alive, that is to say, flogged into action by the Press-gang of Fleet Street.

Mr. Belloc goes on to assert that a people accustomed to aristocratic rule never can become democratic, for they are too accustomed to leaving governance to others even to take a personal interest in it themselves. But all around us we have signs that the ordinary citizen is taking an immense interest in politics; indeed, too great an interest. It is not a very intelligent interest, but it manifests itself in the meddlesome ventures of trade unions and the Council of Action. Indeed, it is to some such a Council as this that Mr. Belloc looks to find the governing body of the immediate future. There will, he predicts, be a Monarch—be he (or she) King, President, or Premier in name is unimportant, equally with his method of election and term of office—ultimately responsible to the commonwealth, and he will be supported and advised by a council consisting of representatives of the various trades and professions. Between these guilds and the soviets of Russia we can discover no real difference. The "monarch" would merely be a Lenin. Is Britain then to lapse into Bolshevism? The alternative which Mr. Belloc foresees is no more reassuring. There can be nothing else for the country, he explains, but dissolution. Now England presents to-day, in many ways, just such a picture as did Rome immediately before her fall. We believe Mr. Belloc maintains the

opinion that the Roman Empire has never ceased to flourish. (With apologies to him we must insist upon its dissolution). Yet England, says he, is declining. He cannot have it both ways: either Rome collapsed, or England is not collapsing. And, knowing his penchant for things Roman, we can predict his choice. For ourselves, we think that there is life in the old country yet. England will decline to fall.

SILHOUETTES.

Ancestors in Silhouette. By Mrs. F. Nevill Jackson. Lane. £3 3s. net.

ON June 15th, 1918, we published an article on Silhouettes, from the historical point of view, and it will therefore interest readers of the SATURDAY REVIEW to find us reviewing a large illustrated volume upon the same subject. August Edouart arrived at a fortunate moment, and his work is the best in the medium that has come down to us. He visited Edinburgh at a time when it was full of interesting folk, who live for us in the pages of Lockhart's Scott; he caught them reading and writing, with their dogs and children, umbrellas and spinning wheels, and immortalized them all. The circle of the exiled Charles X. offered other opportunities for his skilful scissors; so did his visit to America, when people great and small flocked to his studio to get their portraits faithfully and cheaply done. But it is undeniable that the silhouette *en bloc* is monotonous. Individual ones—even a whole section—can be delightful, but an assembly of several hundred leaves the observer bored, especially when many of them represent persons of no interest in a manner that is uninteresting. The text of the book, moreover, is scrappy and inaccurate, even the number of Edouart's surviving silhouettes being variously stated, and much of it is pure padding; indeed, the text injures the book. By far the most attractive portion is that on the Scott circle, and even here the interest is rather in the reader's recollections of Lockhart than in Mrs. Nevill Jackson's pages. But the silhouettes in this case are things to be thankful for, since they really bring to life the men and women of Scott's Edinburgh, and are, further, free from the dreadful pictorial backgrounds of some of Edouart's later work, in which a severe black silhouette is posed against an early Victorian interior or a stone staircase with landscape background suggestive of lavish wealth on the part of the expender of five shillings for a full length, or one of two shillings for a profile bust. Edouart's skill in character is almost uncanny. Technically his work is nothing short of marvellous, and he had the instinct of the true artist in the matter of thinking no subject beneath him. The man who could represent H.R.H. the Duke of Gloucester with a coronet on a cushion in the background could perceive the picturesqueness of the street seller, and reproduce the one with the same faithfulness as the other—the result in the case of the street seller being infinitely the more artistic, owing to the absence of the background with the curtains and coronet aforesaid. It is good to know that a large number of examples of his work are now in the National Portrait Gallery, and that the homely craft of the profile cutter, which he raised almost to the dignity of an art, is coming to its own again; but the silhouette is essentially an intimate possession, and belongs to the family rather than to the public gallery. And Mrs. Nevill Jackson would have done well to devote more space to the art as practised by Edouart's predecessors, examples of whose skill may be seen in various 18th century books to which she does not even allude. With all its faults this is a book that was wanted, it adds to our stores of knowledge.

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A DISCOVERY.

Daniel Gardner, Painter in Pastel and Gouache. A Brief Account of his Life and Work. By Dr. G. C. Williamson. Lane, £5 5s. net.

HOW many people have ever heard of Daniel Gardner? Not many, we imagine, and that for two reasons. Very few of his portraits were engraved, and nearly all are in private hands; but Dr. Williamson's book shows what an advantage it would be if the National Art Collections Fund could contrive to secure suitable examples of his art for the public, and if the Royal Academy could hold a representative exhibition of his pastels and that of other little-known painters of the period. The co-operation of owners could surely be secured; or perhaps the Pastel Society could take a hint for the sake of its own members and show us Gardner and his co-pastellists for the instruction and edification of workers in that medium to-day. Here is a book on an almost unknown artist, whose quality can be gauged from the fact that although he could not draw, most of his pictures pass under the names of Reynolds, Gainsborough, Romney, or Lawrence, and that many of them are nearly decorative enough to do so. Charming groups of women and children, delightful family portraits, penetrating studies of men, and here and there almost a great picture among much that is excellent and little that is devoid of merit, even though the drawing is very bad, meet us in these pages. Gardner must have been an attractive man, shabby and shy, yet dictatorial too—witness his refusal to take pupils, or let his sitters see his work before it was finished, with a disconcerting tendency to stray off into the woods when staying at a country house, and return with his pockets full of toadstools to be used for experiments in colouring his pictures. His love for his wife and children is visible, not in the text only, but in the entire outlook on life displayed in this book. The plates are numerous, and illustrate every phase of his art. Ignorant of drawing and proportion he might be, but ungraceful or unpleasant never. He had a true eye for character and an unfailing love of the beautiful. The book is expensive, but it is worth its price, and apart from the excellence of the reproductions and the pleasure of making the acquaintance of an unknown artist, it has a serious value for what it tells us about frames; many of the types given are distinctive of Gardner's work. When we think of the horrid frames turned out by modern frame-makers, we can only congratulate ourselves on the publication of so many of the right kind; that will henceforth deprive the gilders of all excuse for debauching the eye with the gin-palace mouldings that pass as frames with the average frame-maker, after he has gilded them to resemble brass gas-fittings. The surfaces of Gardner's frames are covered with finely granulated sand on the flat portions to give a matt appearance and the smooth mouldings and the pearls or beadings are not burnished, but left dull, and rubbed down slightly to disclose a reddish tint under the gilding produced by a faded coating of pinkish vermilion applied to the surface of the wood immediately before the gilding is laid on. Gilt frame enrichments tend nowadays to be of plaster instead of honest wood, oak, chestnut or pear, and the modern star ornament a dull rayed object instead of a true patera. Gardner's frames, in fact, bear much the same relation to those of to-day that his pictures bear to those of women and children we see in the Royal Academy. May we suggest that such artists as Sir J. Lavery, Mr. Shannon, Mr. Solomon and Mr. Mann, might give their serious attention to Gardner's grouping and handling of his subjects for the variation and, perhaps, improvement of their own art? One cannot call Gardner an average Royal Academician, since he only once exhibited there, and then as a mere youth; but his work is wholly typical of his own day, and so attractive that it sets us sighing, not for the first time, after the serene and graceful life of the 18th century. We recommend this book to lovers of the Fine Arts; although poorly written it contains much that was scarcely known before, and it provides information that we needed.

A DANISH DICKENS CUM ZOLA.

Ditte: Girl Alive! By Martin Andersen Nexø. Heinemann. 9s. net.

THIS Scandinavian author might aptly enough be said to have the outlook of a Dickens qualified by a touch of Zola. He is keenly alive to the ugly side of things, but it does not form his chief preoccupation. Ignorance and extreme poverty are the rule with his characters. Vice and some degree of cruelty are not uncommon among them, and there is even one terrible instance of crime. But we also find much charity and simple happiness. Lars Peter Hansere, the hero, is a most lovable and sunny-natured man. His step-daughter, Ditte, is another Marchioness or Charley, but endowed with higher imaginative powers than either of them. There are indeed hints of some notable destiny awaiting her, in a sequel perhaps to this volume, which leaves her at the age of fourteen or thereabouts. We note that a rag and bone merchant is considered by the poorer classes a social pariah, that an auctioneer ranks among the aristocracy, and publicans sustain the familiar part of minor satans. (This last is scarcely Dickensian). Elementary school teachers appear in a favourable light; not so, we regret to say, the clergy. Altogether, there is much charm, and no little interest in this Danish picture of humble life some time during the last century. The translation reads remarkably well.

MUSIC NOTES

RETURN OF A FAMOUS PIANIST.—Last Saturday afternoon at the Quinlan Subscription Concert Mr. More Rosenthal, the master technician of the pianoforte, made his reappearance in London for the first time since before the war. He did not do so to the best possible advantage, thanks to his choice of a work that represented neither the genius of its composer nor the special gifts of its interpreter in an adequate light. Mr. Rosenthal, if we remember aright, has always had a peculiar liking for Chopin's concerto in E minor; he has now played it here several times. But he fails, as time goes on, to make it more interesting, or to persuade us that it provides an attractive vehicle for the display of his powers. It enabled him to demonstrate his undiminished possession of the old unerring fluency, the caressing *legato* touch, the marvellous manipulative skill combined with the maximum of tonal power; and so much ought for the moment, perhaps, to suffice. The real nature and extent of his extraordinary talent will only re-emerge, however, when he gives us one of his big recital programmes and exhibits the diversity of his style, his intellectual grasp, his poetic sentiment, and occasionally one of those torrential rushes and climactic crashes that deprive the listener of breath. It has often been said that, when he does these things, Mr. Rosenthal has no equal; and that saying, after having heard him again in the dulllest of Chopin concertos, we believe to be still true. The first fifty minutes of the concert were devoted to Dr. Vaughan-Williams's fine 'London' symphony, an admirable performance. The customary operatic vocal selections—rather reminding one at these concerts of the Philharmonic habit in the old days—were furnished by Mme. Miriam Licette, a conscientious and much-improved singer.

On the same day, and unfortunately at the same hour, there was a feast of good things in progress at Queen's Hall comprising, among other items, Sir Edward Elgar's concerto for violin and cello, Op. 85. This clever work had a sympathetic and thoroughly capable interpreter of the solo part in Miss Beatrice Harrison; while the orchestral portions had the advantage of being given under the composer's direction. The singer of the

THE "B.D."

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afternoon was Mr. Ben Davies, who threw much warmth of energy, allied to rare purity of diction, into his delivery of the air from 'Eugény Onégin.'

AN ITALIAN AND AN ENGLISH TENOR.—We went to the recital given by Signor Bettino Cappelli at the Æolian Hall the other evening encouraged by the report that a tenor of exceptional merit was about to make his début. Alas for fair hopes once more to be blighted! It proved to be only another instance of the square peg in a round hole, which has occurred too frequently of late. Singers fitted by training and experience for the operatic stage, and despairing of finding here an opportunity for the display of their resources in their natural element, have been driven to the concert platform as a deceptive and treacherous substitute. These credulous singers, not being so adaptive by instinct or such accomplished acrobats as the sea-lions who perform cleverer feats at Olympia than in the ocean where they were born, are doubtless astonished when they discover that their pet operatic stunts make no impression in a small hall, save upon a few noisy friends and compatriots. In his own sphere Signor Cappelli might, perhaps, win a success in London equal to that he is said to have earned at the Antipodes. But we rather doubt it, because, in spite of the penetrating force of his high notes, their tone is generally hard, and his sudden transitions from loud to soft, and *vice versa*, are neither governed by artistic significance, nor executed with technical grace. His 'La donna è mobile' oscillated between a whispered warble and a *staccato* shout, with a wrong note as well in the final cadence of each verse.

Compare singing such as this with the exquisite art of the English tenor we have just lost, Gervase Elwes. It is shocking that an ordinary accident in America should have deprived this country of a singer of such unique quality and perfectly constituted talents. It was ever a pleasure to listen to him, to hear his delicately modulated tones, his clear, incisive enunciation, the mastery of his fervid and earnest style. Gervase Elwes will not easily be replaced. The 'Dream of Gerontius' will probably know its ideal Soul no more.

LONDON SYMPHONY CONCERT.—Mr. Albert Coates returned from a hurried visit to New York in time to conduct the concert at Queen's Hall on Monday evening, bringing with him a contract to share for ten weeks in the year the conductorship of the New York Symphony Orchestra in association with Mr. Walter Damrosch. The compliment to an Englishman is an unusual one, and ought not to pass without acknowledgment. Among other pieces Mr. Coates introduced on Monday a new arrangement by himself, as a suite for strings, of a number of 'theatre tunes' by Purcell—charming old melodies in various delightful rhythms, adroitly put together and scored. The Russian composer-pianist, Prokofiev, did not appear as promised, and his place was filled by Mr. Lamond, who was heard in the Brahms pianoforte concerto in B flat. The balance of the programme was also familiar with the exception of Mr. Josef Holbrooke's prelude to his picturesque Welsh opera 'Dylan.'

FICTION IN BRIEF

THE HARE, by Ernest Oldmeadow (Richards, 9s. net), is the story of the delivery of Coggins from his enemies in Bulford, where a previous story had left him, and his conversion to Roman Catholicism after a year's tour in Germany, in the course of which he met Wagner. The obvious intent of the book will lessen its value as fiction and as religious propaganda, but good descriptions and stirring incidents in plenty are to be met with in its pages, and the writing is clean and simple.

THE PRINCESS ZOUBAROFF, by Ronald Firbank (Richards, 6s. net), is a very thin story told in dialogue and labelled a comedy, which it is in the primitive sense of the word, though it could not be acted, and would not amuse if it were. There is a frontispiece and decoration by Michel Sevier which we should think exactly express the mind and taste of the author.

POLLYOOLY DANCES, by Edgar Jepson (Odhams, 7s. 6d. net), is the latest of Mr. Jepson's contributions to the honourable task of keeping people in good spirits. The Hon. John Ruffin, one of his particular brand of subjects, subtly compounded from Ouida and the hero of a Wilde play with some touches of his own thrown in, has been engaged in secret service. While on a holiday to accompany Polyooly, now grown up and a famous dancer, he takes a part in two or three dangerous missions. What these are, and why "Polyooly dances" must be read in the pages of Mr. Jepson's alluring romance.

A GIFT OF THE DUSK, by R. O. Prowse (Collins, 9s. net), is the story of two invalids sent up to the high Alps as a last resort, who gradually come to lean on each other's little strength and return to the world of living men, weaklings indeed but having snatched a little happiness from the dusk which lay before them. It is marked by delicate sentiment, emotional insight, and good writing.

INISHEENY, by George A. Birmingham (Methuen, 8s. 6d. net) is a story in the vein of "Spanish Gold" without the inimitable curate. Inisheeny is an island off the West Coast of Ireland, whose peace is disturbed by the arrival of a mysterious stranger and his charming and lively daughter. The stranger is really an archæologist looking for ancient relics but he is suspected by the police of being a Sinn Féin and by the inhabitants of Inisheeny of being an Excise man. As the principal industry of the island is illicit distillation, which is forbidden by the English Government and by Sinn Féin alike, the most amusing complications arise and the characters are hustled through their parts till the curtain falls on universal applause. A most amusing book.

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SPORT

Badly rattled in the first quarter of an hour at Twickenham last Saturday, the Welsh fifteen never found their game. The history of 1911 was repeated with a difference. On that occasion Mr. A. D. Stoop fielded the kick-off, ran and passed to Mr. Birkett, who sent Mr. Chapman in. On Saturday, after an awful moment in which Mr. Ring came within a yard or two of scoring for Wales, there followed in swift succession Mr. Kershaw's try, Commander Davies's dropped goal and a second try begun by Mr. Smallwood and finished by Mr. Lowe. The English play was unorthodox and Jessopian. Forwards slung the ball across the field as if they were three-quarters, and Mr. Cumberlege raced up from full-back and passed to the three-quarters. But the tactics completely non-plussed a team that manœuvred "according to plan." The Welsh forwards tackled well, and were never quite routed, while Mr. Rees at full back did great things in defence. Brains, however, beat brawn, and the game was lost to Wales. It is true that Mr. Wetter, the pivot of their resistance, went lame with a damaged knee; but England had scored a decisive lead before that mishap.

The English fifteen, in fact, fully justified their choice, and gave a better account of themselves than any English team for several years. Mr. Brown and Captain Wakefield did, perhaps, best in the scrum and in the loose, but it is impossible to note one man in a pack more than another, and in the control of the ball during a rush the whole of the forwards were excellent. Of the behinds, Mr. Smallwood was obviously in the right place, and Mr. Hammett was excellent. It is needless to mention Messrs. Davies and Kershaw, the Service's pair; the goal of the former was a fine drop-kick; and Mr. Cumberlege at full-back played a great game. With reluctance we note that three of England's mainstays are Welshmen—Messrs. Hammett, Edwards, and Davies—the last, however, only in name.

The third Test was one of high hopes and giant despair. Australia again kept the luck of the toss and Collins was again twice missed on the way to his century-and-a-half. Without him the team would have been in a hopeless position, and as it was, England's lead of 93 on the first innings was promising. But slow, unenterprising, yet absolutely sound cricket by Armstrong and Kelleway gave Australia a large lead, which England failed to reduce, losing by more than 100 runs. Thus has gone the rubber, without so much as a pause on its way. No one seems to blame for the result; the English team was simply outplayed by better men. We can only hope for revenge in the coming summer on our own wickets.

We are sorry that Wilde was beaten by Herman last week in the fight at the Albert Hall, but we are not surprised. Among a mass of indifferent boxers and a great many men who are not boxers at all, Wilde stands out as a sportsman and a man good at his job. Mr. Cochran, when he announced his decision to quit the ring, owing to the dishonesty of so many of its members, made an express exception of Wilde. He was not one of those who broke contracts, or agreed to lose for a consideration. But however pluckily he fought, it was asking too much to expect him to make such a concession of weight to a clever opponent.

Messrs. Tilden and Johnson, the great American lawn tennis pair, were beaten in three straight sets last week in Australia by Messrs. Brookes and O'Hara Wood. Previously the Americans had easily defeated Mr. Brookes and Mr. Patterson in the Davis Cup doubles match. Those who have seen Captain O'Hara Wood play in this country will not be surprised. He is erratic, but at his best extremely strong, with a forceful "smash." He and his partner, Mr. R. V. Thomas, quite outplayed Messrs. Brookes and Patterson at Wimbledon in the final for the Gentlemen's Doubles Championship in 1919, while

he himself beat Mr. Patterson at Paris just before the Championship meeting. We hope he will come to Wimbledon this summer, where, in the absence of first-class English talent, we want all the British strength we can muster. He is a player we shall watch with great interest.

Those who idly watch the sailing of model yachts on the Round Pond, Kensington, seldom appreciate that the designing and sailing of these miniature craft have reached a very high pitch of perfection. One imagines the handling of such a boat to be the careless recreation of boys, rather than the enthusiastically pursued hobby of grown men, highly skilled and experienced in the art of boat sailing. As a matter of fact the correct sailing of a model yacht is much more difficult than the handling of a full sized vessel, for when she leaves the shore she is beyond control, and every tendency to sail in a direction or manner contrary to that which is best must be checked by mechanical devices fitted on board. These are of the most ingenious nature, and it is well worth the spectator's time, provided of course that he understands something about sailing, to learn and watch the automatic action of a model under way.

By a clever adjustment of elastic sheets any undue pressure of wind tending to drive the boat off her course acts on the rudder, which in turn pulls the yacht's head back to the desired course. A clever model sailer can so adjust his sails and the rudder that the boat will follow a good course to windward and a true course back, in spite of the puffs and variable winds which make the Round Pond, Kensington, a difficult stretch of water in which to sail even the best balanced boat. There are two clubs in Kensington, one the London Model Yacht Club, which sails on Wednesday afternoons and Saturday mornings, while another, the Model Yacht Racing Association, uses the pond on Saturday afternoons and Sunday mornings. The former is the older club, with more aspirations towards social standing; the other more democratic, has a large membership of busy men devoting their scanty leisure to the building and sailing of their own boats.

Managers of racemeetings find the problem of attracting good fields not a little perplexing, for the reason that the small stakes frequently fill better than those more handsomely endowed for races run over similar courses and under practically similar conditions. The largely increased value of the Grand National has, however, led to an entry of 92, considerably the largest ever known. It is to be hoped, indeed, that there will not be a correspondingly plentiful number of starters; for loose horses are always dangerous nuisances, and a liberal proportion of the 92 do not by any means suggest ability to jump the course. This year no previous winner is engaged, a rare occurrence. Mr. E. W. Hope Johnstone's Ballyboggan finished second to an exceptionally good horse in Poethlyn, and has been running indifferently since. Irish-bred animals usually prove dangerous at Aintree, and a couple of whom much is likely to be heard are Always, who has twice won minor races here, and Clonree, who has also won, and likewise fallen. In November he came down at the first fence in the Grand Sefton Steeplechase.

It is necessarily seldom that an owner of horses wins a race sixty years after his colours have been first carried victoriously. Lord Coventry, however, affords an instance. His Full Stop won a steeplechase at Hurst Park last week, and his owner had won during the season prior to 1863, when Emblem secured the Grand National, an example which her sister Emblematic followed twelve months later. Both results caused surprise, as the two mares were mean in appearance, and, judging by looks, not in the least likely to do what they did. Not many years ago Lord Coventry had great hopes of winning the great steeplechase a third time, with a horse called Inquisitor. Suspicion arose that he had, in the language of the Turf, been "got at."



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THE CITY

THE unemployment throughout the country is not without its counterpart in the Stock Exchange, where with few exceptions business is almost at a standstill. More idle conditions could hardly be imagined. Even speculative interest has fallen to a very low ebb. Such is the lack of confidence prevailing—and the tightness of money—that preservation of capital is the first consideration. That being so, any money available for investment is going into Government securities, with the result that this particular section has been comparatively active and strong. It must be confessed that the general financial situation at the moment is one of extreme difficulty, and it requires more than an ordinary degree of optimism to take a very cheery view of the more immediate outlook.

Meanwhile, mutual encouragement is being fostered by an expression of belief that a reduction in the Bank Rate will be made at an early date. At this juncture so much depends upon cheaper money, that it is tolerably certain the rate will be lowered at the earliest possible moment. But is that possibility yet in sight? It seems doubtful. In these days any change is more than ever subservient to the pecuniary situation in New York. According to latest advices, the situation on the other side does not point to a very early reduction in the rate imposed by the Federal Reserve Board; and if that be so, it is assumed that a change here will have to be deferred. But we have had Bank Rate surprises before, and may get a reduction just at a time when many are beginning to lose hope. A big demand for loans would immediately ensue, which would scarcely meet with such a ready response as might normally be expected. Credit is at such a low ebb that all applications for accommodation would be put through an exceedingly fine sieve.

With the export trade of every country more or less bottled up owing to the chaotic exchanges and restriction of credit, it is manifest that, unless something be done quickly to resuscitate international trade, matters must go from bad to worse. The continent of Europe is crying out for manufactured goods and raw materials of which we have a surfeit. These supplies could be paid for in kind and by deferred credit. Yet nothing is done. Protracted discussion we have had in plenty, but little that is practical or constructive. Meanwhile, unemployment is increasing, industry is coming to a standstill, and stocks of all kinds have attained abnormal dimensions. For years we have complained that dumping has been practised on us without let or hindrance. Why not now put it in practice ourselves? It would pay us well at this juncture to shift some of our surplus stocks of such commodities as tea and rubber for example, to the Continent for sale on easy terms, either on a credit or barter basis.

As already indicated, the tendency of capital is to seek "safety first," and for this reason the gilt-edged group and the market in Foreign Government and Municipal bonds are the best patronised sections of the Stock Exchange. War Loan 5% stock is now priced to give a running yield of no more than 5½%, and if the Bank Rate comes down, this may be reduced to 5% or even 5%. Consequently the upward movement in gilt-edged investments is likely to continue, though from time to time we may expect a renewal of liquidation. Most big firms have their reserves invested partly in Government stocks; and when it is a question of raising further loans from the banks, these have to be pledged as collateral. When the pinch becomes still more severe, this pawned stock has to come out, and the dealers naturally mark down prices, when they know that such liquidation is in progress. But in the case of War Loan Fives the support of the depreciation fund is invaluable. A Foreign bond which looks cheap is Turkish 3½% Egyptian Tribute, yielding nearly 6½% with annual drawings. By the Treaty with Turkey,

which is signed, but not ratified, Great Britain undertakes to relieve Turkey of all liability in respect of this loan.

Conditions in the iron and steel and engineering industries are very unsatisfactory. In the past week several important works have been closed down through lack of orders, and it would seem that a very critical period has to be bridged before British manufacturers are in a position to take advantage of the world-wide demand for their products. Prices of pig-iron have been cut, and those of steel will follow; but owing to the high cost of fuel and of labour and oppressive taxation, our steel-makers are finding it increasingly difficult to compete with those of the United States, Belgium, and Germany. Some relief from taxation may be expected in the Budget, but it is difficult to see how the cost of coal can be materially reduced, while miners' wages remain at the high level to which they were raised under last year's agreement. The whole question of wages in relation to industry is in the melting-pot, and until it is satisfactorily settled, it will be impossible to accept orders where prompt delivery is of the essence of the contract.

Turning to the more hopeful side of the picture, the proposed export credits scheme will, if adopted by the Supreme Council of the Allies, have the effect of gradually improving the purchasing capacity of the distressed European nations, of whom Austria and Poland are typical. No Government hopes can be formed of the expected trade agreement with Russia, because the extension of credits to that country while the Communist Party remains in control would be sheer madness; and until the economic heresy involved by the unlimited printing of paper-money has given place to a sound currency system, trade can only be transacted with safety on the basis of barter. It would seem that the absorption by Central Europe of British manufactured products in sufficient quantities to set our mills working to full capacity must be a matter of months, and it may be a matter of years. Meanwhile, drastic economy in working costs, including the payment of lower wages, appears inevitable if further stoppages are to be avoided. In the United States the workers are finding that lower wages are better than none, especially as money goes further, owing to the fall in commodity prices.

Even in the Oil Share Market, interest for the time being has fallen off to a marked extent. This remains, however, one of the most hopeful groups for speculative or semi-speculative attention, and should be one of the first to respond to any improvement in general sentiment. The leading shares have been inclined to sag, as a result of the apathetic conditions, and in the case of Mexican Eagle there has probably been some selling of the old shares in order to finance the new issues. The market looks for a total distribution of 75% by Mexican Eagle for the current financial year; and if that estimate be near the mark, the shares hold out considerable scope for capital appreciation. In other directions Scottish American Oil have been dull as a result of realizations with a view to exchanging into Soltraco Certificates. These certificates are owned by the common stockholders of the Southern Oil and Transport Company, which owned portions of the now Scottish American property. The certificates in question represent share for share in Scottish American Oil.

It was feared in some quarters that, when the Cave Commission handed in its report on the Chartered Company's claim, the Colonial Office might hold it up for a further indefinite period. Commendable promptitude has, however, distinguished the action of the latter department. Publication has been made within a few days of the receipt of the report. That the result is disappointing is self-evident. The British South Africa Company claimed originally some £7,800,000, plus interest, amounting in all to approximately £10,000,000. Some slight modification was subsequently made. The Commission have awarded only

£4,435,225, and do not allow interest. As the question of payment is contingent upon the termination of the Company's administration of Southern Rhodesia, there is no immediate prospect of the sum being handed over. When payment is made, it is expected to be in the form of scrip. The capital of Chartered is about £9,000,000, so that the award is equivalent to nearly 10s. per share. The £1 shares which recently spurted to 17s. slumped on the publication of the award to 13s. 9d., from which some recovery was made later.

The suggestion that a well organized campaign is afoot to depress rubber shares with a view to purchasing later at knock-out prices, is probably sheer moonshine. In point of fact, share values have held up very well, considering the grave crisis through which the industry is passing. Since the old Contango system has been dropped and all share transactions are on a cash basis, it is impossible to knock the bottom out of a market. If the pre-war system of "carrying over" were in vogue, Rubber shares would probably be much lower than they are to-day. That is something to be thankful for. The times are such that all plantation companies in a position to make reassuring statements to their shareholders, should not hesitate to do so. Forward sales of rubber and the financial resources of the various companies are not always known to shareholders. A knowledge of the facts might in many cases prevent the selling of shares at a heavy sacrifice.

"Much ignorant criticism," remarked Sir Frank Swettenham at the annual meeting of Zumut Rubber Estates, "has been levelled at the Rubber Growers' Association." This is no doubt quite true, but it is nevertheless a fact that the Association has been conspicuously unsuccessful in many directions in which it might reasonably have been expected to give a strong lead. Above all, one would expect that body to have a thoroughly up-to-date, efficient and authoritative statistical department able to advise its constituent company members as to the state of supply and demand in the rubber trade. It is quite clear that the industry has been very ill-informed as to the extent of the accumulation of rubber; otherwise the great majority of the producing companies might have ensured their financial future for at least 12 months ahead by judicious forward sales. The very success of the bears in the produce market is a proof that they were better informed as to the statistical position than the rest.

In our reference to Tea Shares on January 1st, we expressed the opinion that the market had grounded; that being in a sold-out condition it was ready to respond quickly to a little buying, and that considerably better prices were a distinct possibility of the near future. Already this has been borne out. An improvement in the demand found the market decidedly short of shares, and although a very considerable rise has taken place in quotations, holders have not been tempted to sell, and comparatively few shares have actually changed hands. Out of thirty representative tea companies with a combined issued share capital of £5,000,000, it is computed that a total increase in value of £500,000 has taken place since early in December last. This appreciation is, of course, purely anticipatory. The industry is not yet quite on its legs again, although it is already feeling stronger. Low prices are stimulating the consumption of tea, while production is being restricted. Our very heavy stocks of common tea could readily find a home on the Continent.

The failure of a large firm of produce merchants in Mincing Lane this week has created a good deal of additional embarrassment in that quarter, notably in the rubber market. The losses of the firm are estimated to be about £350,000; and this sum is said not to include the whole of the liabilities. More than one firm of rubber brokers is understood to be involved in the failure, and the tension, already severe, has been rendered still more acute. Liquidation of the position will not be helpful to the rubber market, where hope was beginning to revive that a recovery had set in.

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